Journal of a Schizophrenic
Volume 1
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2/26/2010

Just over a year ago (December I guess), I started some new activity in my life, one taking a ritual walk to the coffee shop for exercise, and stepping outside to smoke with the intent to cut back and phase out smoking eventually. I had also been very busy posting on the Internet, including news sites and the openSUSE community forum. The walks were very pleasant and satisfying, and assisting others on the forum was very rewarding.

I posted on the local news sites under the alias 'espresso,' with confidence that my identity would not be revealed. This allowed me to write with a boldness that I would never have under my real identity. I've long known that the Internet isn't truly anonymous, among other things IP addresses are traceable. Servers are cracked, at an alarming rate. This perception of anonymity through an alias, though, gives people an assertiveness they would not normally have. Much of the resulting output is trash, but there are a few gems.

At some point I began receiving angry looks from people while walking, one after another. These were one after another, and I did not have an explanation for it at first. Then I drew the conclusion that my online identity had been cracked and that I had offended people with my postings. I had posted a few times at work, and knowing that my activities are monitored there, I accused my supervisor of having revealed it. He assured me that this was not the case, and I created new accounts on the news sites, with different aliases and stronger passwords.

I went to the mental health center to discuss what was going on. They tried to assure me that nothing was going on, that the angry looks were just my perception. I couldn't buy this, and the following day people just started ignoring me, avoiding eye contact altogether. I was highly suspicious that the center somehow was involved in the situation.

As this continued, I began to worry that my IP address had been traced, and my Internet activities at home were being monitored. I worried that even my thoughts were being read. I discussed this with my close friend Teresa, and she could only suggest that I "accept it."

It was about this time that I found Thanh. Her beautiful, friendly and sincere smile has a calming effect that helped me get through this struggle and find a little bit of peace. I couldn't break the thought that I was being spied upon, but the panic subsided and things became relatively "normal."

2/27/2010

I'm fuzzy on these dates, and the sequence is too important. I will go to the mental health center this week to review my records over the past 12 to 18 months.

Last week I had lunch with my Father. We went to the crepe booth on Pike Street, where we've gone many times before. He wanted to sit on the sidewalk, but there was no way in hell I would do that at this time. We ate on a dirty table indoors.

He asked me to tell him what I was going through, and I likened it to the movie "The Truman Show." In this film, the life of the title character from birth is a TV show, watched by millions. Truman only discovers this by accident when he's in his thirties and leading a seemingly normal life. Pretty creepy. My life hasn't been very normal, but the thought of being watched 24x7 is something I can identify with. Recent events have brought this to a peak.

Dad hasn't seen Truman. I recommended it to him and he intends to watch it soon.

A few days after this, I was smoking in the park next door, and something suddenly came over me. It is a wide open space, visible from the hospital windows and some of the higher windows downtown. It felt like I was standing on a stage. A couple of days later, a similar sensation came over me while sitting at the bar in the coffee shop in Westlake Center. The large window seemed something like a big screen.

Something dawned on me after this. I wondered if the bizarre treatment I've been getting the past year, the sudden attention, the stares in the coffee shop, the comments (e.g., "look at him"), might not be from people believing I was craving attention. Getting out more frequently, sitting in the window, being more active in the online communities. A few nights ago, I was smoking in the park, and a woman was taking pictures of the sunset. I commented "nice time for a picture." She ignored me. A day or two later, walking toward the park, a young man commented "say cheese" to me. His friends laughed.

Why a paranoid would seek attention is beyond me. Schizophrenia makes you cling to your privacy and anonymity as hard as you can.

2/28/2010

I attended a conference presented by the local ACLU chapter yesterday. I have told myself for years I need to become more active in the chapter for years, but my fears have held me back. The subject this time was privacy and surveillance, and I decided this was one I must attend. I've had so much going through my mind lately, though, I had forgotten about it until a reminder popped up on my

computer one hour before the opening plenary. I really was reluctant, but I had to go, and arrived an hour late.

The bus ride was spooky. I felt people behind me with their eyes turned on me. Standing in front of windows has a creepy effect on me these days, and waiting between buses I wondered if people in the building across the street were watching me.

When you're paranoid, almost nothing seems like a coincidence. Arriving at the conference, I saw that there was only one name on the sign-in sheet, the one I have been using as a pseudo name online recently. I'm using an anonymizer for most of my web activity these days, but not with 100% confidence. I wondered if they knew I was on my way, and were sending a subtle warning to me. I did not comment on this, but went ahead and signed in.

One last incident, I created a web blog account a couple of weeks ago, under my pseudo name and an email account created through the anonymizer (Tor). Last Monday, I received a series of spams in my personal email account urging me to log into an account on the same blog site. This faux account was under my personal email, not my pseudo account. I hadn't noticed such spam before, though, and this has really concerned me. I've kept one copy of the spam.

Some other recent "coincidences" include the date on my D-Link router being set to April 1st. I am almost sure that I had set the correct date and time, and I've been unable to establish an internet connection between my router and modem, but has someone somehow made a fool of me?" Kelly suggested to me that the "say cheese" comment was just a coincidence, that there was probably no connection to the camera. It would seem like an odd coincidence to me. Then there was the nursing caretaker. As I got on the elevator to step out for a smoke, the caretaker whom I have been friendly with for some time came running in, happy and excited. I have wanted to get to know her better, but she speaks virtually no English beyond a simple greeting. She said something about me and the nursing center. I told her no, I don't work at the nursing center, so she repeated herself. I really wish I knew what she was saying. But the odd thing about it was that she seemed to have known that I would be there, as if she had been waiting for me.

As I write these notes, I feel a suspicion that others are reading along. It's hard to break the feeling that my computer has been cracked, although I've scanned the ports and scanned for root kits, and found only one problem that concerns me. It doesn't seem to be possible to close the telnet port on the modem/router. I've contacted the provider about this, but they won't be any help, as I don't not use Windows. They seem to know little about the device anyway, they won't even acknowledge that it is a router as well as a modem. The datasheet calls it a "modular router!" For whatever reason, the manufacturer only provided an extension for wireless routing, but it only provides one wired port. They originally planned to provide a wired extension, but this never got out of production.

It was just too late to gain much from the opening presentation. I heard the last 30 minutes, and fragments of that. There were two workshops following that, and the one I was most interested in was in a different room. I was not in any condition for mingling, though, and remained in the first room and left early.

When I go out for long trips, > 1 hour, I always carry my MP3 player to hear the music. This time, the bus ride was only 30 minutes each way, and I certainly wouldn't have any use for it at the conference. I've always appreciated the therapeutic effect listening to the blues can have, but this was amplified yesterday. The stress on the trip was more intense than I can remember recently.

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I'm sure I brought on a lot of this attention myself. I can often be unsocial or even antisocial, and old habits are hard to break. I've been trying to phase out smoking this past year, too, and that doesn't make things easier. I developed a bitterness growing up that isn't easy to overcome, but I've mellowed somewhat to a degree that I'm not angry as I once was.

I can live with people being angry with me, there might even be something I can do about that. But this uncertainty and suspicion is hard to live with. The fear that all of my actions are being tracked, that someone may have access to my email and all of my passwords, as well as private documents such as this.

Tue. 3/02/2010

Today I've been determined not to bring attention on myself. This poses a dilemma, as my normal behavior seems to draw considerable attention, and anything out of the ordinary would likely draw notice as well. My fears of being monitored are not subsiding, and I am completely lost as to the degree and who could be involved.

Last week I had an outburst at work. I was out of line, and my bosses made sure that I understood this. The response seems to be a campaign to humble me, but I don't need any help at this right now. I took a day off work to speak to my nurse, and tell her the frustrations I've been having. She couldn't tell me anything I could find reassuring, but gave me an ear that I needed. This is only the second time I've missed work for medical reasons. I had a mild case of the swine flu in the Fall, and stayed home a couple of days due to that.

The day after this outburst, a Wednesday, Thanh dropped by the lab and said hello. She was very cheerful and friendly, as she always is. I stay until closing on Wednesdays, but this day did not leave the desk. It wasn't until 9:30 that I realized Thanh had been there all night. It would have been a good time to talk to her, but by the time I realized this she was gone. I kept hope that she would be at the bus stop, but I haven't seen her since.

As I no longer bring cigarettes to work, smoking is the first thing I crave when I get home. On my way in, I saw that it was busy out in front of the building, and decided to go out the back door for a cigarette. It tasted especially good today. I looked around for people, cars and windows, telling myself not to raise attention. A pickup stopped by the door. After finishing the cigarette, I went back to the building and hyperventilated as I was walking.

I just went out for another smoke, and ran into Terese on my way back. I asked her what our relationship would be from now on. I told her that she has been my closest friend and confidant, and that I have been going through hard times. She tells me that her husband, Scott, just doesn't feel comfortable seeing her spend time with certain other men, and I'm one. She suggested dropping by every two weeks, but this kind of itinerary wouldn't really be the same. I guess I've lost a friend, and she'll be hard to replace.

Thu. 3/04/2010

For the last couple of days I've been deliberating leaving Seattle and getting a new start. Some places that come to mind are San Fransisco, New York and Austin, Texas. I just don't think I'll be able to recover from the events of the past year as long as I'm here. These days I dread going out. People won't look me in the face anymore, random comments and conversations seem to be attacks on me, everything I do seems to be under scrutiny. I can't even go out for a walk right now.

I don't know where I'd find employment.

Fri. 3/05/2010

I went to the coffee shop this morning for the walk and to hear the news. I don't really gather much from the news podcasts these days, my mind just isn't focused to hear much of what's said. I stopped by the drugstore to buy some cigarettes. While I was checking out, the cashier responded to someone behind me "should I call the mental hospital?" I didn't ask any questions, wish I had, but I smiled to be polite, and the person behind me said something like "she made him smile."

Sat. 3/06/2010

This isn't the first time anything like this has happened to me. Something similar drove me out of my neighborhood on Capitol Hill years ago, and forced me into therapy and medication. About a year into my sobriety, having lived in a cramped room with cheap rent for four or five years, people had noticed my lack of direction or any social life. There was a concerted (confrontation?) in the neighborhood, that seemed to mushroom into something much more scary. I began to sense that people all over the Seattle area were angry with me for what I was or was not doing, and were trying to manipulate me into being something

else. There were some bizarre, sometimes terrifying experiences during that time, from people following me and others yelling at me to being watched constantly. I was working in a real estate office most of that time, but that became unmanageable, as I had to step outside every ten minutes to calm down.

Some of this was quite real, much was fabricated by delusion. Medication helped, but it didn't stop until I left Capitol Hill and moved to a relatively private place on First Hill. For a long time, this frustrated me, but eventually I was able to let it go.

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From as much as I can gather, the hospital staff across the street seems to be amused by my behavior. I hear frequent laughing and comments from them. In one case, I had an infection in my leg, and walked into the walk-in clinic to have it checked. While waiting for a doctor, a group of nurses went by and made a comment about me, laughing. I felt uncomfortable and left quickly, going to Providence instead.

I was smoking in the park a while back, and two hospital staff were chatting behind me. I saw someone moving a wheel chair up the stairs, and I offered to help. I heard one of the staff say "and then occasionally he does things like that."

More recently, I had returned home from work one night, and after eating read the news and posted a comment. Following this, I stepped outside for a smoke. Standing out in front, a nurse looked out the window upstairs, and laughing said loudly, "he's outside."

I have a suspicion that people watch me from the hospital windows. There are no windows directly across from mine, but at night, there is a clear view from about a half a block down. It would seem hard to believe that they don't have more important things to be doing, but this is a suspicion I can't break.

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I no longer enjoy going out for my morning walks, in fact I almost dread it. For quite a while, there has been no better way to get exercise than to play some music and head out for a coffee. This has been healthy in other ways, on some days it's the only time I get out at all. Now I dread going out. Any privacy or anonymity I once had is gone, and it's something like going out bare to the skin.

Fri. 3/12/2010

I saw my step brother Tom last night. He was attending an NA meeting downstairs. I just didn't recognize him, it was crazy. He's family, but his face didn't register to me, even after he told me his name. Once it finally hit me, we talked for a little bit, but it didn't occur to me to invite him upstairs.

I also spoke with Terese for a bit last night. Since we last spoke, she had seemed to to be avoiding me when we passed each other, usually looking away. She assured me that this was unintentional, that her dental problems were causing difficulty for her and a smile was very burdensome. I don't recall what else we talked about, but all the while we also played with her dog Simba. I have a special fondness for him. I watched Terese raise him from an angry, abused young dog to a loving, playful and content adult. I like to think I helped in this process.

Having been back on the max dosage for a few weeks, I've calmed down the last few days and my fears have started to subside. I worry, though, that I'm just putting my real problems under the burner. My doctor only wanted to talk about medication yesterday, but insisted this would 'go away.'

Sun. 3/21/2010

I'm beginning to feel less confident in the anonymizer I am using. On Friday evening I posted a sarcastic comment on a news site regarding an article about the Boy Scouts and revelation of sodomy among their leaders. I mimicked the tone of a red neck, commenting on BSA's refusal to admit gays. I later wondered later if others would read this and interpret it to as the opposite of what it meant. Sarcasm doesn't work with some people.

I was tense on Saturday morning, wanting to take my walk to my favorite barista but dreading going out and facing people. I'm not sure if the post was part of the reason, I'm sure it was at least in the back of my mind. While passing through the Freeway Park, a man turned and looked at me, with a bitter look at that. He then spit in the garden. I have no doubt he was giving me a message, and fear that my Friday comment may have triggered it.

I'm reminded of an experience during my last months on Capitol Hill. The constant harassment and intrusion made it impossible to sleep in peace. I went to my sister's in Kent one night to get some rest. Laying on the couch, beginning to doze off, I heard some voices. "Here he is," "we know where you are." I'll never be sure whether these voices were "real" or delusional. Real in that people had some psychopathic power over me that I could never escape. I still have experiences where I don't even feel like I can hold a private thought, people are constantly reading my mind and I must be very careful what I think.

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I've been back on my full dose of medication for about a month now. A positive of this is that the physical toll that things were taking on me have subsided. I was losing sleep and appetite, and even feeling physical pain. I had mild headaches and a strains in my chest and the left side of my face. In one bizarre experience, I was feeling a strong gravitational pull throughout my body while walking back from the park.

Wed. 3/24/2010

Thanh is the only calming influence in my life right now. I've looked forward to each Thursday this quarter, anticipating seeing her and chatting with her for just one hour. Her soft, compassionate voice and friendly and reassuring smile warm me and show me that things aren't hopeless. That our relationship will never reach anything beyond the platonic level it is at now is heart breaking, but a matter of reality. I know she appreciates my feelings for her, but the discrepancy in our ages will prevent any serious relationship from developing out of this. I've asked her out a few times, and she acted interested, but the reason she gave for saying "no" was that her aunt did not approve(!). She is 21, and lives alone, and I suspect that she was just trying to be polite. Asking her on work time got me in trouble, I'm not sure that it was Thanh or one of the floor leads that reported it. In either case, I haven't gone any further.

I need to leave the college and finally move on, but things that prevent this are lack of development in a single marketable skill; fear of the sudden shock of a new workplace; the comfort and relative stress-free environment at the college, although of late that hasn't been the case; and, the loss of a friendship like none I have ever had in Thanh. We might continue to correspond by email, but it would never be the same.

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Thanh aside, stress has been building up at the college through all of this. It's not the first time, but through my outburst and some of the comments that have followed, I need to get away from there. I'm humiliated, the events of the past year have carried over there, and it's just not worth it any more. So what would be a better situation? I'm struggling financially, a new environment would only magnify my anxiety, and that's ASSUMING that I could find employment with my skills during this recession. I don't know if I qualify for SSDI at this time, but it may be something I need to consider.

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I've given a copy of these notes to Kelly, my mental health nurse, today. The understanding is that this is confidential, and she will destroy her copy after reading it.

Fri. 3/26/2010

I felt calm and peace this morning. No worries, just enjoying the moment. Maybe handing the notes to Kelly released something. I went to the barista at Westlake Center, and sat next to a beautiful Japanese student who was drawing images of the Public Market. We chatted for a while, I found out she was in Seattle for the Spring break, and returning to school in Cincinnati tomorrow. I didn't get any contact information from her, and I thought to ask her to lunch, but didn't follow through. I'm sure I won't see her again.

Mon. 3/29/2010

While standing in front of the building puffing a cigarette this morning, a young woman with some friends looked at me and said angrily, "Oh my god! This is too much." I have never seen her before, nor her friends, and if she was trying to give me a message, I do not know what it was. It's bothered me enough to stay inside today, avoiding contact when possible.

Earlier in the day, I was listening to the news while sipping coffee at the barista at Westlake Center. Two women walking past looked at me and laughed. All I can possibly gather is that they saw that I had made my ritual walk listening to my media player in the pouring rain, and found that amusing.

Sat. 4/03/2010

I was very agitated after Monday's events. I saw my doctor on Tuesday afternoon by a scheduled appointment. Lately, all he's wanted to talk about is medication, and that's a little frustrating. His schedule is overloaded, though, and not by accident. There's just a large clientèle at the mental health center, and a couple of full time psychiatrists. He asked me if I was depressed, something I have been asked several times and something I haven't wanted to think could be the case. Depression has somehow struck me as a kind of weakness in the past, and the thought that I could have a dual diagnosis is, well, depressing. Epilepsy, alcoholism, schizophrenia and /depression/? Sometimes I can be a little hypochondriac, but things seem to pile on. Eventually we agreed to return to the seroquel.

Maybe the doctor was right. After a few days of dreading and avoiding going out, except for a smoke, I was in high spirits this morning. I felt excitement on my way to Westlake, and thinking of the young women there suddenly began to arouse me. Arousal to the point of an erection. I walked most of the way trying to hide this, and wearing denim jeans two sizes too small didn't help much.

On low medication, sexual arousal was out of control, with frequent erections and no way of using it. Having no intimate relationships, all I was really getting out of it was some embarrassment, although I don't really know that others noticed, and occasional release through masturbation.

My two favorite barista employees were serving. One is a young, very young sandy blonde with a very friendly and pleasant smile that always makes my day. She's nothing like Thanh, although she is young and optimistic and very good company. I complimented her smile when leaving, and told her not to lose it. You can lose a smile like that very quickly, I know that from personal experience.

Sun. 4/11/2010

Started the day with my ritual walk to WC. A lovely young woman sat next to me at the counter, initially seeming very friendly. Then I had thoughts of her testing me, to report my response back to whomever. I continued listening to my music for a few minutes, then shook off my initial thoughts. I noticed she had a camera, and tried to start a conversation around that. She was texting a message, and continued to do that as I spoke to her. It occurred to me a little later that she didn't even look at me once in the time I was talking to her, just giving short responses.

Strange. In recent months, people have avoided looking at me altogether, sometimes even looking away when I walk by. This seemed to be magnified on my way to work during the rush hour one morning this week. Then I when into the tunnel to catch the bus, and as I passed the crowds, I detected everybody was watching me, and couldn't look back.

The other day at the store, I was chatting with Andi while checking out. When I asked her how she was doing, she made an interesting comment, so I asked her "what does that mean?" She told me something about there being more excitement than I would want or could handle, so I just smiled, but couldn't help taking it personally. I do lead a dull life in most peoples' eyes. Spending many hours confined in my apartment, with few social contacts. If they knew what my condition puts me through, though, I doubt they would find it dull.

Then yesterday, walking home from the store, a woman with two men said "good boy" as I walked by. It sounded like a sarcastic and diminutive remark toward me. But I didn't look back when she said it, and maybe there was just something I didn't see.

I have visions of people sitting around a table or chatting online, saying things like "what's with this guy?" or commenting on my behavior, and scheming what to do next.

Thu. 4/15/2010

Leaving town now seems imperative. For as long as I've been here, I just haven't been happy. I have it driven in my brain that I can't have friends or relationships. I don't hate people here, but with few exceptions I just can't trust them. I've lost any privacy or anonymity I once had, and I'll never have that back as long as I'm here.

Peter mentioned Austin. It's a liberal bastion in the heart of Texas, with the motto "Keep Austin weird." I'll have to check it out. Peter has plans to visit friends there, and maybe I can join him.

San Francisco also comes to mind. If I could get a job at Archive.org, or maybe a job at ACLU headquarters in NYC, it could be a very interesting experience. Pretty intense, though.

Sun. 5/30/2010

Peter and I had planned on traveling to Austin this weekend, but this was set back to July. As always, money will be a problem. I had paid the airfare but canceling it rescheduling implements a $200 fee. Peter said he would help me out with this. I'm already short on rent this month, and I'm worried I won't have any money to spend in Austin.

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A new song by my favorite blues band has me thinking constantly about Thanh. The title is "Wishful Thinking." Pretty much sums up my feelings and relationship with her.

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I've been taking seroquel for a couple of months now, and it seems to have made things manageable. I'm calm and good-spirited, and my worries are fading. Still there, but not dominating my life.

Wed., 6/02/2010

I invited a young woman to join me for lunch. She is a beautiful young Asian lady who always lights up when I see her at the barista at work. Warm smile, gentle voice and very friendly. She was busy today, but said she would do so tomorrow.

Within an hour or two, I felt like word had gotten around Seattle. People were making rude comments when I walked by. I'm not sure what they were saying, and maybe my mind was just playing games with me. But, Seattle is like a small town to me. Everybody always seems to know what I am doing, and there is a lot of gossip about it.

Thu., 6/03/2010

Felt a lot of excitement this morning. Made me think of the high school geek in the movies being arranged for a date with the beautiful cheerleader. I thought that might not make a bad opening line. Uncontrolled erections have me a little concerned. This has been happening a lot lately, and it has been embarrassing. Maybe the seroquel has brought it back. I'm not sure people have noticed, but it's hard to hide.

On the way, I heard more comments. I doubt that it's a secret on campus. It's a relatively small area, and I've been there so long it seems logical that most people there would naturally recognize me and know what I do there. Thousands of people visit the Open Lab (where I work) every day, and I am a familiar face.

Meden (I'm not sure I have her name right now) didn't show. Maybe she forgot, maybe there was a miscommunication. I asked the guy at the counter if he knew

where she was, but he didn't know who Meden was. I left a message, but I wonder if she will even notice, as it appears I may have her name wrong. It sounded like "maiden" the first time I heard it, and I wrote it down as quickly as I could. I have a poor memory for names, though.

It crossed my mind that I might have been set up. Like the high school geek. I felt a little embarrassed. Not humiliated, though, and I continued through my daily routine. I asked Thanh to say something to cheer me up. She had never heard of a "Meden" either, but she tried to take my mind off of the subject. I was even feeling suspicions of her this day.

To compound things, I found out there was an issue with my medical coverage when I went to the pharmacy. I was not covered for prescriptions at all. I also realized that I have been charged full fare this month despite my disabled permit. As strapped for cash as I am, this really aggravates things.

Sun., 6/06/2010

I went through a couple of days of depression. On Friday morning, while outside for a smoke, I thought of my "Truman Show" analogy. I started to break up. I wondered how long I could continue this. A walk with some music helped, but I spent the rest of the time with a hopeless feeling that things will never change.

I feel alright this morning, but the recent high is over. I'm hoping that seeing Meden again on Wednesday will clear things up and give me a positive charge.

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I'm angry right now. Took a trip downtown, and the chatter seemed to center on me. The music didn't drown it out, and may just have aggravated things as I couldn't confirm or refute my feeling. One guy seemed to make a gay gesture with his hand, but it happened so quickly I didn't see his face or even for sure what his intentions were. I have a bloody knuckle right now, from punching crossing buttons and walls.

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Mon., 6/07/2010

I realized this morning that I did not set a time and a place with Meden last week. I simply assumed that she was working on Thursday, and we would meet at the barista. This will be hard to live down, but maybe we can give it a second chance.

I feel better than I have in several days, maybe from going to a double dose of the seroquel. This was the amount originally recommended by my doctor, I'm just reluctant to drug myself any more. When I begin mutilating myself, it's time to do things differently. My primary care physician suggested taking walks more

frequently as a way to reduce smoking. I find it hard to get myself out without a destination, and I couldn't afford heading to the barista several times a day. I need to find another motivator.

Wed., 6/09/2010

I felt good this morning, until I went to the barista and found that Meden was not there. I was told she was not feeling well. My suspicion was that she stayed away knowing that I would be there, and to avoid me. That might seem silly, but I can't break the thought.

I had some stops to make downtown before coming home. Again, the chatter and the laughter all seemed to be directed at me, but I could not confirm this. It happens quickly, and confronting people isn't my style. Worst are the possible outcomes. Asking a person "are you talking about me?", and being told otherwise, is an embarrassing situation. I tend not to believe them, anyway. And if told yes, what from there? Do I really want to know what people are saying?

I only tried the full dose of the seroquel for one day (Monday). I felt a little better, but my thoughts were scattered and I didn't feel like I had control of the situation at work. Maybe I'll try it again Friday, with a weekend to adjust.

Thu., 6/10/2010

I woke up with a feeling of hopelessness this morning. Like nothing I do will change the situation I am in. It isn't a pleasant thought, but expecting things to change now, after 48 years of the same thing, just doesn't seem realistic. A window seemed to be open, with Thanh, Meden and Maria at the college. That opportunity is gone, and now leaving Seattle seems more urgent than ever.

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I found some relief speaking to Thanh at work this evening. As always, she seemed happy to see me, and interested in what I had to say. And always showing that beautiful, optimistic smile that melts me every time.

Every Thursday night there is a NA meeting in the hall next door. When I go out for a smoke, I get the feeling that the people in the meeting are watching me. Tonight, even after they had left, I had the same feeling as I walked by, as if there were ghosts in the chairs which they had been sitting.

Thu., 6/17/2010

Meden didn't show yesterday. The school quarter's over, so I won't see her again soon. "Wishful thinking" seems to summarize my relationships with women in general. I don't offer much, and when there is an attraction, it's rarely mutual, if ever. I am probably going to die a lonely man.

Money problems are my first concern today. I'm earning less at work than I was last year, and costs are rising. I have $30 to last until the 25th, at which time rent and utilities will be due. One of the most frustrating costs is transit. Since the regional transit system stopped issuing transfers, the cost has skyrocketed. I can no longer pay cash, and instead maintain a balance in an account. The system is slow and inefficient, and transit costs have been nearly double in some months what they were before. There's been another hike in cigarette taxes, and my rent rose last year.

Sat., 6/26/2010

It's getting where I can't enjoy much of anything these days. People seem to object to everything I do, or don't do, and want to let me know this. Passing comments on the streets, or even from people seated next to me. Yesterday I was seated at the barista next to a couple, listening to my music and looking out the window. The young man had to ask "what is he looking at?" From that point on, their conversation seemed to turn around me, although I wasn't sure what they were saying. I turned the music down, but still couldn't make out most of what they were saying.

My walk to the barista has been almost a ritual, but it's getting harder to follow on this. Knowing that people are watching me, and the scolding, for what I'm not sure, takes away any enjoyment there might have been. I need to find another source for exercise and pleasure, but I don't know what it might be. Sex, of course. But I can't get a serious relationship started with a woman, and often feel like I am avoided.

Sun., 7/04/2010

I've pretty much given up my daily walk. I'm tired of the comments and the gestures, and don't really see any way to get around them. Why people find my actions upsetting I don't know, but I guess I won't worry them any more. It's hard to say how much of this has been real and what's been symptomatic, but the latter builds on real events and becomes intolerable.

I've been making a change in my anti-psych medication this week. We'll see what the results are. The old stuff does still have some effectiveness, based on what happens when I have cut it off. It may just not be enough.

Fri., 7/23/2010

Why can't I feel good? Even trying to help people, I have fears of repercussions. The last few days, my posts on the openSUSE message boards haven't been receiving responses. I've wondered if I've said something recently to lead to a collective slight. I've had fears behind the scenes before, it's a very uneasy feeling. Then this morning, I was reluctant and uncomfortable in posting a comment intending to be helpful, but worried that I might seem to be showing another person up.

Last night, I offered to post texts from the Archive on my site for a woman who was unable to download them due to policies in her area. Simply reaching out and doing a good deed. But first I wondered if I was being naive in revealing my email address, which includes my full name. Then I thought it might have seemed that I was trying to outdo someone else who had made an offer.

In the early day of the Internet, I had no issue with sharing my name and identity. I posted to boards under my full name. My registered domain also includes my name. Things changed. Spammers began harvesting email addresses from archives of message boards and news groups. Things I had posted years ago remain in these archives forever, some of them embarrassing. Sometimes there are repercussions for postings and comments, with people attacking others lives out of spite. And as I became more aware, I also came to understand that the 'net is not anonymous, alias or otherwise. It's still advisable to use an alias, but things you say and do can be traced back to you in other ways. I have been careful to use an anomymizer for sites where there is a potential for backlash.

I've stopped taking my walks. It just seemed that others were determined to dictate to me what's wrong with my life and I've lost my tolerance for this. I haven't found a replacement. Stepping outside to smoke is becoming onerous. I don't go next door to the park anymore, and go out the back door more often, where I'm less likely to be seen.

Sat., 7/31/2010

Lately I've felt like I'm being ignored by the entire community of the Linux distro that I have used for years. Problems/comments on the forums go without responses, ditto on the mailing list and the bug tracker. I'm sending a private message to a forum moderator who goes by the alias "oldcpu" to see if I can confirm or refute this. It's terrifying for me, this is one of the few social outlets I have. If my suspicions are confirmed, it also won't be easy to adopt to a different distro. And then, if I'm wrong, this will be somewhat embarrassing.

I'm checking back over my forum posts and I'm not quite as sure of my hypothesis. It's possible, but I think I'll wait a day or two and see what happens on the current bug that seems to be in limbo. I'd like to test this, but I don't have an idea as to how to go about this right now

****

I've been seeing much more of Thanh this quarter. Usually I only see her a couple of hours a week, but she is working longer hours now and we overlap much of that time. We're talking a lot, and not just about work now. I've never regretted having failed to develop social skills in my life, as the occasional silence may make her a little uneasy. She does something for me like nobody else ever has, I'm on a high during my hours on campus, and all of my current problems seem moot.

I need to take this beyond the friendship we have now. I worry that that's only temporary, and we'll both be moving on. I have to discuss this with her after work on Monday, it might be the last chance I'll have.

****

Draft message to oldcpu:

Hey - Maybe you can confirm/refute something for me. I've been getting the feeling lately that I'm being ignored in these forums, among other places. Questions and comments seem to go without responses. Is there something going on?

I'll be honest, I'm paranoid, man. I can't walk down a street without feeling like people are watching me. I have enough problems right now than to be worried about something like this. Moving on to a different distro would be one thing, but having to wonder like this is torturing. :(

I'm sorry if I'm letting my imagination get the better of me, but I need to get this off my head. Can you help me out here? This is making me..

****

Feel a little better from having written this. I'm debating the second paragraph, but this has let off a little steam. Will put off sending it.

Just posted a comment on one of the boards, a little humor in a response. See where this goes.

****

The other day I posted a news link on a mailing list. Obama wants to loosen requirements for the FBI to obtain "National Security Letters," or NSLs, to access peoples' Internet activity. I wondered what my ISP could provide to the FBI or other agencies if requested, although I use an anonymizer. At one point, a person commented that "they don't give out NSL's for just any whim or fancy." I responded that it only takes a disgruntled employee or greedy company, and pointed him to two recent cases of wide scale government spying on civilians. The conversation ended.

People /are/ watching us. Some take no issue with this, they're doing nothing wrong, after all. Others just seem oblivious, unaware or surrendered to it. I do not find comfort in being under observation simply because the technology is there and they /might/ catch a genuine criminal/terrorist in the process. I need to feel anonymous, when I walk a street I can't stand the idea that people are watching me. When I post a comment, it's not of concern to NSA or people who

are just nosy and curious. Such comments are made publicly, but they aren't intended to be fodder for analysis of me and my idiosyncrasies.

Mon., 8/02/2010

After Saturday I wondered who might have read my comments on the mailing list (I do not use an anonymous email account for this). Obviously, I'm not the only local subscriber. I had thoughts of it being forwarded around, possibly taken out of context. I felt good about what I had said, maybe it would be read respectfully, but the feeling of being crucified, for lack of a better term, made it hard to know what to expect.

I went to my mother's on Sunday, to talk and to ask for financial help. Walking to the drug store on my way home, one of two young women made a comment that I didn't fully hear over the music, but her tone was sarcastic and she made a reference to a "lax standards" term I had used. I ignored them and went inside.

****

I'm scattered this morning. I wanted to purchase an album just now, but downloading it requires special software. One thing led to another, and I convinced myself that I had installed it, now I'm out of ten bucks. Requested a refund.

****

I finally watched to a segment of Friday's 'Democracy Now!,' a news program I watch or listen to daily. Amy Goodman is a hero of mine. This was the same show that revealed Obama's proposal to me in their headlines. The subject was collaboration between Google and the CIA, and a 'Recorded Future' program tracking websites, blogs and twitter accounts. Google, in spite of their "Do no evil" motto, has been involved with NSA in the past and with all of the information Google records, the potential is scary.

****

Having reservations about approaching Thanh today. I worry that if she says no, there will never be another chance, and there will never be anyone else like her. It would be crushing. And the way to approach it is problematic, not to make her uncomfortable but tell her how important she is to me. And, the awkwardness over the last two weeks would be difficult for both of us.

****

Thanh just posted to the message board. She will not be coming in to work today. Tomorrow I'll be working until 1:30, Thanh until 3:30. Thinking about hanging around. Strange coincidence that she would post this minutes after my last entry. Things just don't seem like "coincidences" anymore. I can't help thinking about

someone spying on my computer as I write this, and passing information on. I've had feelings about this for a while, but tests do not confirm it. I just can't convince myself it's not happening.

****

I posted messages on the forums over the weekend. There was friendly chatter. Maybe there's really nothing going on there, but I don't know what it will take to make myself sure.

****

I can't get my mind off of people spying on me. Random behavior seems to reinforce this. Even when people don't look at me I transpose this to be people trying to convince me that it's not true.

Tue. 8/03/2010

I've been thinking of reasons or explanations for these events, and each one makes me angry, and scared. Last night I seriously thought people were so angry with me that they wanted to drive me to my death by suicide. I told myself out loud, hoping they would hear, they can't do that, they will not make me do that.

I saw Thanh today. I almost immediately asked her where she had been yesterday. She said she had a dental appointment. My first thought to myself was, "that sounds like a classic line," but immediately realized I was being paranoid. It turned out to be a pleasant day, at least for a few hours. Once I sat on the bus to start home, my mind just kept recycling the thoughts I've been struggling with, and the music would not drown them out.

****

I sent an email to my step-brother Tom this morning. I need to talk to someone outside of the clinic, where I'm basically told words to the effect of, "you're crazy, take your medication."

Wed., 8/04/2010

I sent a message to Thanh last night. I told her how I felt, and asked her to join me. I'm feeling remorse right now. It might have been better to have waited until Monday, but yesterday Richard was stepping in, and I couldn't sleep thinking about this. Richard is a Frenchman, a soccer player and a womanizer. Competing with him may be fruitless. I'm worried about how things might go next week, and feeling regret for having done this through something as impersonal as an email.

While writing the message, the phone rang. Nobody responded, there was just background noise. I have a feeling somebody was trying to stop me.

My doctor prescribed sleeping pills last week. I take so many medications, I didn't want to think that I would need this. But I'm waking up early, exhausted, panicked and depressed. I finally picked them up from the pharmacy yesterday, but did not take any last night. I'm not sure why not.

****

Yesterday I was discussing a beach party with Maria. Somehow stalking came up, and I wondered if she was trying to send me a message. Do people think I'm a stalker, looking out the window? Scheduling hours to overlap with Thanh? I don't know. My presence at the barista seems to upset people, would this explain why? What does Thanh feel? When I created the schedule this quarter, I ended up with a large amount of hours on shift with her. This was a coincidence, a happy one for me, but do others see it that way?

If anything else goes wrong, I'm not sure how I'll handle it.

****

This medication is not helping. Things are getting worse, and I need to find an alternative. Another medication maybe, maybe Tom has a suggestion. Just gave him a call, haven't heard back from him sending emailing yesterday.

****

For weeks, I have had an ongoing issue with my Linux distribution regarding expired security keys. Technical details aside, the dates on each key were identical. This seemed to be ignored, and in a bug report, I was simply told to ignore it, and not given any satisfactory explanation. I finally noticed that the expiration dates were all April 1st, 2010. I asked if this was an inside joke. Maybe I've been played for the fool. I have enough concern about people snooping on my computer already, though, than to risk root kits on my system.

It always seems like the whole world is in on something, and I'm the only one out of the loop.

****

I saw a beetle just now, on its back, struggling to get back on its feet. Sums things up right now. I wondered if someone had placed it there for me to see. I turned it over to help, but it was right back as before. The humane thing to do would have been to kill it, but I couldn't do that.

****

It's evening, and I went back to the spot where I saw the beetle this morning. It was still there, struggling after all of these hours. I crushed it, and I feel terrible. I had to step on it three times and finally grind its body to put it out of its pain.

Thu., 8/05/2010

I haven't read the newspaper in days. Just glance it over. I'm usually a news hound, and love commenting on the boards on the news sites. A kind of apathy has set in. Maybe it's not so much that as I have too many things that are much more urgent. I haven't even listened to Democracy Now! this week.

****

For days, I'd been regretting my letter to Thanh. Putting her on the spot like this could make her very uncomfortable, and I have worried this could end the friendship we have. Almost as bad, having been warned previously, I could lose my job because of this. She came in to work this morning, and she smiled and said hello. She seemed very uneasy, though. I find stopped her and took her aside, apologized if I'd made her uncomfortable, and asked her to delete it. She told me she hadn't seen it yet, and asked when I'd sent it. I'm not sure that I believe this, but still felt relieved.

I had some good conversations today, one with a student who has returned afer several years. He had tried to start a career in programming, but struggled and ended up leaving and washing dishes. I don't think it was his fault, he was receiving some bad instruction. I told him I will be washing dishes soon, he was surprised but suggested a place called Daniels, a restaurant on a hotel downtown. Dishwashers are paid $11 an hour there, a decent wage.

Fri., 8/06/2010

People have been trying to shame me or embarrass me into doing the right thing. They're doing this through head games, and a person like myself doesn't respond well to this sort of thing. It turns into an emotional and psycotic storm. Strange that the more I trust people right now, the more suspicious I become of them. Yesterday I found out that Amanda and Alex at work are sister and brother. I've felt a trust for each of them to this point, and even sensed a kind of bonding. But after learning this yesterday, I couldn't help getting the feeling there was some secret between them that I should be aware of.

Sat., 8/07/2010

Thanh sent me an email this morning, turns out she had read my first message:

<BLOCK>
Thank you for interested in me. However, I'd like to share with you that I'm dating someone right now. And we're very much in love. It is against my heart and will to share that love with anyone else. Beside I always think of you as a very nice and experienced co worker. And I want to keep it that way. Please don't sent a letter like this to me anymore. You're making me feel uncomfortable!
</BLOCK>

Ouch! Puts me in my place. I replied:

<BLOCK>
Sorry, Thanh. I thought we understood that you would discard the message, but I guess this wasn't clear. I wrote it late at night and wasn't thinking carefully at the time. I hope this doesn't hurt our working relationship. Again, I'm very sorry for this lapse, and please don't hold this poor judgment against me.
</BLOCK>

This is heartbreaking, but right now I'm even more concerned as to whether I may be out of a job. I need to get some advice on this. I had a good talk with Tom yesterday, although I didn't bring up Thanh. Maybe I'll send him an email this morning to see what he thinks.

****

I've contacted Tom, and I think I'll contact personnel on Monday morning. It would be easier to approach an impartial third party than my supervisor or anyone with direct contact in this.

****

I've been spending the last two days on a project on my computer, building a live appliance (OS on a memory stick, CD, VM). It's been more challenging than usual, but it's been a good distraction.

****

My life is a glass bowl. On my way to the drug store, a man looked at me and said "ouch," as if commenting on Thanh's email. At the pharmacy, the woman at the window was somewhat rude after I gave her my name. People think my life is boring. I would challenge most of them to go through what I do.

****

I didn't associate the comment of the stranger with my comment above at first, but this is not a coincidence. There have been too many coincidences, I'm being spied on. I've disconnected my computer from the Internet, for how long I don't know. I might just use the live appliance for browsing in the future. Usually a safer way to go, anyway.

I don't know how long this has been going on, but I've had suspicions for quite a while. Now, I don't know who's involved in this, or who I can trust anymore. And people will probably tell me I'm paranoid..

Sun., 8/08/2010

I've rebuilt my computer, reinstalling the OS with no Internet connection at this point. I'll use a live disk for that purpose for now. Somebody could have a lot of sensitive information (SSN, passwords, possibly banking information) as well as very personal information including these notes. I've had all of this encrypted, but at this point that seems to have been futile.

I haven't heard back from Tom. I realize that he's busy this weekend, but it would be nice to get a word.

****

Deliberating how to handle my situation at work. I intend to approach human resources, hoping that an outside party can better accommodate this. It's extremely hard to focus on what I might say, with everything else that's going on right now.

I just can't think what these people find interesting in my life. I have few resources, so there would be very little profit, and I live a somewhat dull life in most people's eyes, and would't provide much entertainment. It's like they were aware of my passion for privacy, and deliberatly destroyed mine for their pleasure. My worst fears are being affirmed.

****

A passing woman remarked that "he really fell for it." Fell for what? I trusted a person, and that collapsed on me. Trusting somebody is "falling for it?" Maybe I'm better off for being paranoid.

Tue., 08/10/2010

1:30 AM. Can't sleep tonight. I'm angry, scared and a little confused. I took two sleeping pills, but this has my heart racing. I don't know who was involved (many people), what damage was done (deep), or what I'll have to do to recover. Maybe the worst thing is that I feel suspicions of everybody I know.

I'm still finding damage on my computer. Connectivity through a live device is probably futile, as access to the home system is still possible. I plan to talk to Ed Smith as soon as possible, he's a Linux pro and might have good advice to get me back on track here. I haven't changed my passwords online yet, need to do this ASAP, will go to work early to take care of this.

The crazy thing is that people seem angry at /me/. Like I had this coming, now I should get in the program. Who are they, what are they thinking? What's the point of deliberately crushing a person who's already down, who struggles to trust people already?

I spoke to Thanh directly yesterday. She didn't seem to understand what I was saying as I tried to apologize, and now I wonder if it wouldn't have been better to have let it go. She's hard to read, and I don't understand women very well, anyway.

The campus seems relatively calm, but even there, I'm asking myself, "can I trust so-and-so," wondering how wide knowledge of all this really is and who might be complacent.

I'm chain-smoking these days. Cigarettes have become the kind of crutch that alcohol was to me a long time ago. It's really hitting me in the pocket, but don't tell me to "take a deep breath." Funny, in the early days of this, one thing going right was cutting back and aiming to quit smoking.

****

It may be possible to do some browsing if I encrypt my hard drive. This would block access to the file system, but people would still be snooping on my Web activity. It would be very limited, I don't know if I will be able to work online next week.

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8:00 PM. I got a little bit of rest after work, and hope to sleep good tonight. I still don't have an appetite, and am just too tired and rattled to do much of anything. I nearly panicked when I was unable to change my online banking passphrase, and couldn't get help over the phone. I finally went to the bank in person and it turned out that I was using an incorrect user ID. This is a relief, as apparently I haven't logged into this account and there isn't as much urgency now.

Being offline limits what I can do to kill time. Normally I might read the news, check the message boards or the scores. It's pretty boring right now. Watch TV, read, catch up on the budget.

Wed., 8/11/2010

I finally got a night's rest. I have a lot to do today, in particular I need to finally see Ed. I can't go back online without being sure I don't make the same mistakes I did before.

I'm tempted to accuse Alex of being one of the perpetrators in this. I have a feeling he and a few others at the college are laughing at me, if they haven't been all along. I don't know how to connect him, but I just want to say something like, "what was the point?"

I keep thinking about cameras now. Watching me as I type this. I just can't make myself believe the worst part is over. My neighbor recently revealed to me that she had noticed that I had been smoking more than before. She had been

watching me on the security cameras every time I went outside. Now I can't break the thought of hidden cameras in my apartment. The computers at work are almost certainly secure, but I get the nervous feeling there that people are tracking my accounts online.

Fri., 8/13/2010

I worked until closing last night. Not because I wanted to, but I just didn't want to go home. My personal privacy is shattered right now, and every minute I'm here is scary and painful.

Going out isn't much better. What's been written in these notes has been revealed publicly, and while I gave some thought to others reading this later, it would only be by careful editing. There are comments that may anger some, and a lot that I just wouldn't share with any but a trusted few.

Revelation of my Social Security number should have me alarmed right now, but so far it's been on the back burner. I need to take steps to guard against ID theft, a very real danger right now. I had been confident that keeping the info encrypted would be sufficient, now I've learned otherwise.

This goes beyond embarrasment. I'll never be able to live this down. If I stay here, my withdrawl will keep going deeper as I never feel any sense of dignity again. I'm thinking of San Francisco again, we'll se what I can work out. I've been deteriorating anyway, and this makes it imperative. People wanted to drive me out of town, and I guess they've done that.

At least it's revealed to me. I don't know how long this was going on or how long it might have continued. There's a little bit of relief in being able to stop it and take steps to repair things.

Fri., 9/03/2010

Nearly a month and so far everything's just been talk. Realizing the size of the task of relocating has put me back, things such as employment, housing and support are going to be higher barriers than I anticipated. I'm doing a job search, but haven't had any replies. I inquired about Section 8 housing for low income support, but applications are not even accepted at this time. The only friends/support I have are family and the clinic, and making new contacts is never easy for me.

As I anticipated, people don't believe that I was hacked. That doesn't really matter now, but it would be nice to make them understand what happened. I might try to explain it to Tom again, but that will probably be a dead end.

I haven't been getting out, getting exercise, doing much of anything but sitting at my computer chatting online. I'm more leary than I've ever been, watching the network moniter constantly for anything unusual. This morning, there was a

spike that I couldn't explain, a long wave that was just too far out of the norm to ignore. I disconnected. It may have been the software package updater, but I haven't noticed this before.

This isn't healthy. The lack of exercise and direct socializing, and the heavy smoking are going to take a toll.

Tue., 9/14/2010

I added myself to the Facebook site this week. Interesting that they collect data on people before they even sign up and fill in their profile. They already know information about friends and family, providing "suggested" Facebook friends. I am going forward with caution, providing minimal information and using the highest privacy settings available. It may be good for me. It won't take me away from my computer, but it may expand my social network. It's come to be the best way to contact some people.

I've raised my medication level to the highest level ever. This was the recommendation of my doctor. I'll see what this does. Some of my fears have faded in the last couple of weeks, but I still have concerns about people monitoring me.

Thu., 9/23/2010

Went back to work this week. It's too busy at the beginning of the semester to worry about anything else. There's a new young lady, Debbie. She's very lovely and very friendly, with a striking smile. Kind of luring, but I need to be realistic.

I ran out of funds yesterday. I tried to purchase two packs of cigarettes and was disapproved, to my surprise. I'm careful with my purchases, logging them and watching carefully, as most people should do. I must have missed something recently, but checking the history online I can't see what it might be. Nothing suspicious there. The discrepancy is roughly the price of two packs of smokes, and I always buy them in pairs.

I don't get Facebook. So far the only people I've been able to "friend" are family and those from my early years in Kent. Almost without exception, my comments fall to silence, making me think of the cartoon staple where a stage performer makes a spectacular (or maybe hammy) effort, only to find an empty audience and the sound of crickets chirping. When I found only my Mother was responding, I thought about removing my account, else be labled a "Mother's boy." Not that that isn't somewhat true.

Sat., 10/02/2010

Most events in the world around us are essentially random. If you're standing on a lonely street corner and a car drives by, you have no knowledge of where the driver came from or where he is going. It's just a coincidence that the two of you

happened to be in the same place at the same time. You might be able to infer some things from the direction or rate he's driving, but it's really a random event in your own world.

When you're paranoid it's hard to accept things as random or coincidental. Background chatter seems like comments or discussion about you. Events such as cars are personalized, with drivers turning to watch you and sometimes yelling remarks that you can't quite make out. From time to time these things are actually realized, reinforcing the dillusional

I recall once standing at a bus stop on a busy street. Every passing driver was yelling at me, angry in tone, but I couldn't make out what it was they were saying. I didn't look, tried not to let it bother me. I finally couldn't stand it any more, and moved away from the street across a parking lot. The voices started to fade, and finally it dawned on me that what I was hearing was the noise of the tires on the pavement.

Then leaving the store the other day, a driver yelled something at me after I crossed the street in front of him. We were going in different directions and I couldn't make out what he said or who he was. It's been eating at me since then, wondering what he was talking about. I really have no idea, but I keep thinking of things he might have said, trying to put meaning into this.

Sun., 10/24/2010

I have very strained relationships with my brothers. I've done things over the years, going back to my childhood, that may not be forgivable. My behavior still seems to set off sparks, and my psychotic condition is only partly to blame for this. My lack of social skills, and often failing to give thought to my words and actions can make me very abrasive. When I act spontaneously, my bitter side often takes over. Most of the time I'm silent, worried about making impressions.

My anti-psych medication has been increased to its highest level yet. 40 mg, instead of the usual 30. This has been some help, the constant badgering and intrusion are fading in my mind, but I still worry that medicating myself is not the answer in the long term. I'm getting out a little more, but concerned about my physical health. I'm not getting as much excercise as I had been, and I'm smoking very heavily these days.

Sun., 10/31/2010

I'm gradually becoming mare comfaratable with Facebook, although I'm not expanding my base with it. I still have concerns that my comments are ultimately public and will be regretted later. Meeting people is more elusive than I would have thought. Maybe I'm wrong but people are reluctant to add "friends" beyond those they already know and trust outside of Facebook.

Mon., 11/02/2010

A young woman came to the desk at work today and asked me to come outside. I was reluctant, she looked unhappy and I preferred to face her in the lab with others around. After talking a bit, I followed her and she began rambling about being worried that her father returning from the airport, Microsoft being more secure than Google and people spying on her in our network and Facebook. She was in a hurry, and I didn't give it much tought at first, but now I wish I had tried to reach out to this woman. I have a good idea what she is going through, and she needs support right now. Her situation has been reported to college officials, and hopefully she will get help soon. I hope I see her again in the future to let her know she isn't alone.

Fri., 11/05/2010

Mornings are very depressing. I wake up feeling no hope, and little to look forward to. My morning walk used to cheer me up, but now even that takes a toll on me. I have thoughts of suicide, although both pride and fear prevent any serious deliberation. Being an atheist, I view death as the ultimate end, but I am not quite at peace with that. The thought of people remembering me having gone out that way, giving up, also keeps me at bay.

Thu., 11/11/2010

I've been developing a friendly relationship with a woman named Maria at the college. She's interesting, and we've been out once so far. We went to a hip hop show put on by some of her friends in the U District. I was relaxed that night, spent the night talking to her and not paying attention to the people around us. She's been prodding me to go out with her again, but I've been putting it off. It's flattering that she's approaching me.

Thu., 11/25/2010

Thanksgiving started somewhat tense. I've alienated my sister's family by being distant and seemingly not caring about events in their lives. I felt successful in breaking the ice with some friendly conversation and a little bit of humor, but it will be a long time before we develop a really cordial relationship.

Fri., 12/03/2010

I obsess about things I have said for months and even years, embarrassing remarks or things that might offend others. I worry that people will somehow use or hold these against me. This makes it difficult to engage in casual conversation. I always dread saying the wrong thing. This is one reason anononymity has been important to me in socializing on the Internet. I have confidence that nothing can be traced back to my real identity. This is not true socialization, but I communicate with a confidence I don't have under my real indentity.

Wed., 1/26/2011

Life has been fairly "stable" and I haven't had as much to write about recently. The things that have bothered me the last couple of years haven't gone away, but they're in the backround now. More urgent are my financial and employment situations. I'm not making ends meet with the PT job I have now, and have borrowed thousands from family to get my bills paid over the years.

Tue., 3/15/2011

An idea from Tom. Start making lists of things I've done, as well as goals. The former would include both big and small accomplishments, the latter short and long term goals. I need to keep it realistic.

Sat., 4/01/2011

I'm filling out paper work to verify that I have a disability. In describing how schizophrenia has affected my ability to work, I went mainly by the effects when off medication and therapy, and went as far back as my days in a real estate office in the early 90s. Limited hours: I was unable to finish my day as the constant chatter and crowded environment sent me on a tailspin. To this day, I limit myself to part time work. Limited responsibilities and ability to perform: I was reduced to simple and menial tasks. My condition is still a hinderance in advancement. Social skills: I was angry and confrontive, and working relationships were hanging on a thread. This continued well after starting medication, and I guess it's the only way I know how to deal with fear. It's improved over the last few years, but it's still there.

Sun., 4/03/2011

Talked to my case manager Kelly at the clinic on Friday. We discussed the usual things, voices, moods, violent urges. I brought up a feeling I've had for a while, about people in other departments at the medical center snooping on notes for my sessions and discussing them outside the center. I asked her questions about the network security, and she tried to reassure me that any unauthorized access would be flagged immediately and the abuser or abusers would be fired. She will ask the department head to request an investigation, but I'm not sure anything other than vindication would be convincing.

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I had a good time yesterday. Went to a painting party at my step brother's house, and it was a good opportunity to meet his other. Tom was at work, so Janet and I got to talk for a while and get to know each other. She's a great woman, a recovering drug addict now entering nursing. I look forward to seeing more of her.

I spent the evening at a rock show with an old friend playing in the cover band. My friend Peter joind me, and while we didn't mingle much, it was a great night.

I've known Peter for quite a while, meeting him at work but keeping in touch well after he left there. We discuss things such as politics, movies and music, and he has some very interesting views. For a long time I've been reluctant to consider him a friend, having suspicions and fearing a letdown. This has finally come to pass.

I'm starting to "get" Facebook. I wouldn't have known about either event yesterday without it, and never would have gone. Not a way to meet people, too bad.

I'm reluctant to go out this morning. It would be good to get out for a walk, have a coffee, listen to some blues and stop to get some groceries. I'm tired, though, and feeling stressed. I feel like I've done all I can handle this weekend.

Sun., 4/10/2011

Discovered a new band recently, Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears. I'm really excited by their music, a sort of blues-rock-R&B fusion. Black Joe sounds eerily like James Brown who, along with Howlin' Wolf, they cite as their inspiration.

After hearing them on the radio a few weeks ago, I immediately scooped up both of their albums. I subscribed to their page on FB and found out they were coming to Seattle (last night). This I had to see, but going by myself was just unthinkable. Peter wasn't interested, he had plans to see a metal band that night. Thought about Jarka and Gaby at work, but decided I was setting my hopes too high. I then thought about Amanda, no stunner but outgoing and very funny young woman. I asked her out on Friday morning but she was busy, of course. She responded to the lead-in within a couple of hours, then didn't get back to my proposal until Saturday morning. Sounds like a rejection.

The rejection, along with realizing I was going to miss the show, sent me on an emotional tailspin. I wanted to get out for a walk and get some cigarettes, but a feeling of fear overcame me. I finally forced myself, and getting out and hearing some music calmed me down for a while.

Getting home, part of me felt like I just couldn't miss the show, while at the same time I just knew I would feel too uncomforatable going alone. The deciding factor was money. After a $1000 windfall in February, my funds are drying up again.

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I'm spending more and more of my days stretched out on my couch, dozing. In the past, I would lay down once a day, do a crossword puzzle or meditate, then shut my eyes and rest for about 30 minutes. I've found this healthy and therapeutic, I would waken with new energy and feeling fresh. It's never affected my sleep cycle.

I'm doing this more and more, when I'm down, when I'm bored. Yesterday I must have spent half of my day sleeping. This is a sign of depression, and I need to get a handle on it. Starting some projects to occupy myself would help. I'll have to discuss it with my doctor.

Sat., 4/16/2011

My sleeping pattern is changing. I'll doze off at 6-7 o'clock, and wake up two to three hours later. I'll go down for the night at 11:00 or so, only to wake up at 2:00 or 3:00 feeling restless and not able to get back to sleep.I turn on the radio and surf the Web for a while, and finally go back to sleep a few hours later.

Sat., 5/07/2011

What I know about women and sex, which is little, I learned on my own. I was never close to my Father until I started taking medication when I was in my thirties, and didn't have an older brother to look up to. I was in and out institutions in my early years and never attended public schools, and didn't have an environment to learn basic social skills needed in life. The result has been a fear of sex, to the point that I've been virtually inactive for my entire adult life...

Sun., 5/08/2011

I had a great conversation with Thanh on Facebook yesterday. She was sharing links from a Vietnamese pride page, including essays and music. One song struck me, and I asked her for the English title. She replied "I Love You," although not in the sense that I would wish. Looking it up on a translator afterward, the phrase "me yeu con" seems to be specific to a parent loving a child. It was Vietnamese mother singing to her children. The woman's voice was stunning. Thanh kiddingly asked how I could enjoy the song without understanding the lyrics. Maybe I was enjoying the pictures? I told her that the woman has a beautiful voice in any language. I shared the link on my own page, and sent it to Mom for Mother's Day.

Earlier I wished my step sister good fortune at the farmer's market. Rain was forecast, and although it was the first market of the season, attendance might have been low. I "blessed" her by Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec sun god. A bit of humor on my part. Within an hour or two, the Sun began to break through, and Steevie and her partner had sold out almost immediately. She attributed this to "positive vibes," and I wondered myself. I felt an excitement through the rest of the day, as if there were a power to my optimism.

I went to the barista this morning, and the young women there seemed especially friendly. Really glad to see me. Yea, they're paid to be cordial make people feel welcome, but they seemed especially pleased, almost excited to see me. I wondered if it had anything to do with FB, couldn't think of anything else. As I drank my coffee, I began wondering if I might be drawing attention to myself. I first enjoyed the thought, then began to dread it. Tension came over me, my eyes

became heavy. I couldn't confirm that people were watching me, but I couldn't convince myself that they weren't watching me, either.

When I arrived home, I looked at myself in the mirror, wondering about my outward appearance. My eyes looked tired, scared and suspicous, slanted downward and sagging heavily. I just couldn't enjoy a moment, and these happy, pleasant events don't happen very often.

Sat., 6/05/2011

Post on FB:

What the hell is wrong with people? It seems like my every habit or nuance eats at them and drives them to contempt. Sitting on the aisle on the bus seems to be somehow wrong or disrespectful. I don't smile enough. Enjoying music and a coffee while people watching drives them mad. Scroo 'em. I have enough problems to concern myself with their little peeves. Life will go on, maybe with just a little more acrimony.

Tue., 6/07/2011

I sat in a barista the other day with a dude mocking my motions and expressions. Even donning his headphones. It has me angry, and pretty creeped. It's the same place where people stood in line, turning and staring at me in unison. I used to go there often, not so much anymore and probably never again. The incident triggered the post above, which I'm now feeling some regret over.

The episode has triggered a scared, hostile feeling that I'm afraid I won't get over soon. Being watched and closely examined would be creepy for anyone, but for a person with my neuroses and experience it's extremely disturbing, and has me going on a tailspin. I had felt relatively calm for a while, but now I can't get my mind off past events and my fears are intensifying.

I received a letter from the medical center yesterday telling me that an investigation has been completed and nobody without authorized access has been snooping on my records there. This doesn't completely eliminate the possibility that someone has been publicizing my records, as someone could simply be exploiting their privelages. The letter says that all access has been "appropriate," and I'll have to accept it at that.

I'll be working long hours for the next couple of weeks, losing some sleep in the process. The added stress will be a heavy load but I need the money badly.

Thu., 6/09/2011

A woman approached me at the bus stop Tuesday night. She was an attractive woman, about 40ish. We had a nice conversation on the bus, and it went pretty smoothly on my part. Toward the end of the ride there was a momentary silence

that would usually send me into a panic, but this time I felt comfortable. I had to get her phone number, and had my card but no pen. She had said she was going all the way into Westlake, but suddenly was in a hurry to leave, saying she needed to get off in Chinatown. I fumbled through my wallet, asking her if she had a pen, but there wasn't time and she told me she didn't have a pen anyway. The moment was gone.

On Wednesday I wondered if this was just a test, people wanting to see how I would respond. I still can't get this thought off my mind. The ending is also familiar to me, with a woman being in a hurry to leave. She said she'd forgotten, but I have a hard time taking it at face value. Don't know what I might have said, or if the silence made her uncomfortable, In any case, I doubt I'll see her again.

Sun., 6/12/2011

Pulled my rant from FB. I don't know if it served any purpose, but it could very well work against me, especially as I search for employment. I should be more careful.

I had an interesting dream last night. I found myself in what I first thought was a medieval castle, with stone walls and arched windows. But when I wanted to leave, and my friends were urging me to, I realized that it was a prison, and I had what seemed like hundreds of people on guard watching me to see that I stayed where I was. I desperately looked for an exit, then entered a room and found Ringo Starr. I high-fived him, exchanging words I don't recall now, and ran out the door he had left open.

Music plays an important role in my life, and I guess Ringo symbolizes this. Most days I couldn't get out of my apartment without it. It replaces the constant, intense, noise and chatter with melody and lyrics that help to soothe and free the soul. There are people who see this as disconnect and anti-social behavior, but what interacting I do wouldn't be possible without Smokin' Joe and the blues.

Fri., 6/17/2011

The dream has me on a positive note. I'm not concerned with much other than the music. I'm in good spirits, and nothing anyone else does can bring me down right now. The snooping and whatever else aren't as important as they were. I had a job interview this morning, and it went very badly, but after a few minutes I was able to chock one up for experience. I'll have to prepare myself better next time.

Fri., 6/24/2011

I joined Tom at a music club the other night. The feature band was great, but the warmup bands were pretty bad and made the night kind of long. Tom and my nephew Keaton had to leave early, and to aggravate things Tom's friend Nick just wouldn't talk to me. We'd met before at a painting party and he seemed friendly

there, but somehow I must have rubbed him the wrong way. I spent the end of the night in the back, feeling isolated. With the music playing it wasn't too bad, as I could see that everyone else had their eyes on the stage.

This week is the school break and I don't have to work on campus. I enjoy working at home. The hours are flexible, I'm not as rushed and I can listen to the radio playing in the background. Only drawback is most of the support requests are by voicemail, and these take longer and are more challenging than email or web interface. I typically have listen three times to gather details such as name, phone number and network ID, and creating a description from their often vague information can be difficult. It's work though, and I'm only paid for as long as I can stay busy.

Thu., 7/14/2011

Job interview this morning. Cold reception at the front desk, not even a smile. The interview itself wasn't a disaster, but the guy gave me a look toward the end like, "are you kidding me?" Would be a good place to work, and I'm sure I'd do well. Too bad.

Fri., 7/22/2011

I don't know how to leave a friendly gesture at just that. When someone gives me a smile, I try to find a reason for it, an explanation.

Sun., 7/31/2011

People haven't seemed very "friendly" in recent days. Hard to explain, but the looks I get are getting me unnerved. I get the feeling that I've done something to displease them,

I was having trouble sleeping the other night. I had painful, suicidal urges, thinking about jumping off a freeway ramp and wondering if someone would stop me or even care. These urges were stronger than any I can remember. I thought about calling the 24 hour crisis line, but decided to fight through it.

Tue., 8/02/2011

I had something of a panic attack last night. My dish towel was missing, and in looking for it, I began to think someone had been in my apartment and taken it, just for the purpose of tormenting me. As I continued I continued I became more and more convinced, and brought myself to believe that it was the building management was harrasing me. I was ready to go to the office the next morning to make an accusation.

I finally found the black towel on my black chair. I'd been sitting on it! I must have left it there when I was anxiously searching for my keys earlier. The keys were still in the pants I'd worn the day before. I'm getting absent-minded these

days, don't know if it's the meds or a symptom of my psychosis. Or the stress I've been feeling in recent days.

Thu., 8/04/2011

I went $300 over budget last month. Mostly cigarettes, but cash on hand and "miscellaneous" items took a big chunk as well. I have very limited income, which is a constant stress factor, and I don't need anything like this. My reny check will be late again, and I'll probably be asking my Mother for help, as I've done so many times before. It's painful to ask, as I've borrowed thousands of dollars from her in the past and until I'm in a state of mind to get stable, full time employment, I can't even start to repay her. Bless her, as she's been so much help to me over the years.

Sat., 8/06/2011

My first encounter with suicide came at age 13, when I meant a guy named Clay in a mental hospital. We were both in the lock-up ward. Clay was a very nice guy, had a lot more world experience than I did, and a good sense of humor. He was a few years older than I was and I really respected him. He never showered, though.

Clay had cut his left wrist with a razor, and wore a sling on his arm for the entire time I knew him. He did it out of anger toward his parents, he said. As he watched himself bleed, a feeling of terror came over him and he called the medic. Throughout the time I knew him, he said he would do it again, but I just couldn't believe him. He had a peace about him that I wished would rub off on me.

After about a year there, I was to be transferred to juvenile detention. I was scared, I'd heard some terrible stories and didn't think I could survive. I quietly locked myself in the bathroom, pulled out a piece from a box spring and filled a paper cup with water. The metal piece was too thick to fit in the outlet. From time to time I think about how close I came, and while I haven't had a happy life, there've been a few moments to cherish and the thought of death is a lot more terrifying to me now than juvie turned out to be.

Wed., 8/10/2011

I've been misplacing things lately, the keys, the towel and now my thumb drive used to backup data, including some very private information such as this. The most critical stuff is encrypted, so it shouldn't be a serious breach. I left it plugged in the support desktop when helping a new person get things started. I'm sure it will still be at the desk, but I won't feel comfortable until I have it safely in my pocket.

Thu., 8/18/2011

Starting an anti-depressant this week. Seeing if it helps things. My doctor suggests my anti-seizure medication is diminishing the affect of the olanzapine, and this will offset things.

Thu., 8/25/2011

The Prozac seems to be having an effect. I'm calmer than usual, but then I'm not getting out very much, either. The college is closed for summer, and I don't have money to spend so I'm pretty much spending my hours on my computer, watching Facebook and the forums, and keeping up with the news. I spend a few hours a day working online, but my next paycheck will be smaller than usual and I need to concentrate on finding steady employment.

Thu., 9/01/2011

Feel better than I have in a long time, but I don't have anything to show for it. I'm stepping up the pace on my job search, but I'm not getting out but once or twice every other day. I'm working at home while the college is closed, and limited hours there and need to watch my wallet, cutting back on things like coffee.

Wed., 9/21/2011

Back to the grind. We're going to a new system at work this quarter, and I was initially excited about this, and looking forward to getting started. Now I have reservations, moving to the office where I don't feel I get much respect, and maybe I don't earn it. I'm also wondering what I'll be doing after the initial phase, and if I'll be working as many hours as I have previously. Emailed my supervisor to find out more. Feeling a lot of tension the first couple of days, maybe it's just temporary.

Sun., 9/25/2011

When I'm out, I hear a voice in my head saying things like "his hand's in his pocket" or "he's rubbing his nose." It's me telling myself that people are watching me and examining everything I do, no matter how insignificant.

Sat., 10/08/2011

The tension at the office has built up this week. I'm doing a good job, but little things, like people coughing, make me feel like I'm being exposed and derided. I have a tendency to put meaning into random events, like people smiling or not smiling, or maybe someone brushing me on the bus.

I'm trying to get involved in the Occupy movement, but it's very hard to be in a crowded environment for long periods. Worse, I'm getting the feeling that some people want to drive me out, but there's nothing really to indicate this.

I turned 50 this week. I don't feel old, but there are so many things I haven't done, such as travel or engage in a meaningful relationship,that I feel like I'll never have a chance to do. Having already missed missed with so much time, I don't feel much of a chance now.

Sun., 10/16/2011

I've been engaging in the Occupy Wall Street movement for a couple of weeks, feeling good about it but not participating as much as I wish. I'm posting quite a bit on social media such as Facebook, but making a physical presence is difficult. Yesterday there were thousands at the park, and I'm quite surprised I lasted as long as I did, mainly by moving around a lot or going to an open area for a cigarette. I found one person I know, a security guard where I live and while we didn't chat much, I took some comfort in seeing a familiar face.

For some reason, the march was harder. I struggled not to stand out. Any time the crowd began to separate, I quickly moved forward to hide among others. There were periods of uncomfortable silence. I thought about leading a chant to break this. This wouldn't be in my character, and while it would have been a good exercise, my fears were just too overpowering.

The important thing is I made it. Would like to have returned after dinner to support a planned act of defiance, but felt some relief when hundreds of others did so and police let the night go on.

Mon., 10/17/2011

My mind is racing right now. Accidentally doubled my meds, making me dizzy and leaving work early.n I have a system for this, I leave the glass up after taking meds at night and turn it over when I take them in the morning. Today the glass was down, but I had a feeling I'd forgotten, Took my meds again. I've done this once or twice before, and it makes me very dizzy.

Last night I was having serious thoughts about going the night without sleep, standing by at the occupation in the event of a raid. Had a cup of coffee around 7 PM. There was a good crowd there, though, and I decided it would be better to get sleep.

This morning at about 5 AM there was a Twitter feed about 12 police cars at the occupation. I thought about skipping work and started to send an email to my boss, but decided to wait and see. I leave at 5:30 anyway and the park is on the way to the bus stop. Stopped by there and all but two cars had left. They said it had been a ploy of some kind, trying to catch them while they were asleep. I was relieved I wouldn't miss a day of work. Can't afford to, I have money problems anyway. Went for a coffee at the barista next door.

As I was listening to music, looking out the window and contemplating my weekend and the day ahead, four young people walked in, ruggedly dressed and

carrying their backpacks.I'm sure they were campers. After several minutes I noticed one of them was looking at me for what seemed a long time. Made me nervous, don't know if that was his intention or if he was wondering what *I* was looking at. It bothered until I got on the bus.

There's a beautiful young woman I see on the bus every day, thinking how nice it would be to meet her but not taking the first step. Last week I set out to do this, following her off when we arrived at the college and intending to introduce myself. She was in a crowd, though, and kept looking back, as if scared. I often creep women.

Saw her today and she kept her eyes closed, as if sleeping, but I had the feeling she was just trying to eye contact with me.

After about a half hour at the office the meds started to kick in. Struggled for about an hour before finally finding someone to fill in and starting home.

As I left, a young student whispered, out loud so I would hear it, "he stares." Screw you, lady. Stumbled to the bus stop, but made it home without making a scene.

The morning has me thinking about people's perception of me, and the opinions they form. Whenever I do something positive, they seem to find something to pick apart. I go for a walk, getting some excersize and fresh air and enjoying some music. Stop for a coffee, and they see that I sit and stare. I do excellent work in my job, but others see that I should move on and work 70 hour weeks for Microsoft. There's not much I can do, and it makes me feel helpless. I shouldn't let other people pull my wires, but the continuous badgering I feel aggravates other problems and triggers deep animosity and distrust.

Sun., 11/04/2011

I had an embarrassing medical emergency last week. I had an infection on my penis of all places. I felt very uncomfortable about sharing it with anybody and put off having it examined for four days. On Thursday night I finally walked into the emergency ward and very awkwardly described it to the triage nurse. I would be doing this many more times and gradually gained a sense of humor about it.

The surgery was more painful than anything I can remember, but it was very quick. I've been hit by a truck before, but lost consciousness immediately and have no recollection of any pain there. I used to have cluster headaches, and while these were not quite as painful as the surgery, they lasted for thirty minute intervals and happened on a daily basis, and were much worse that way. But this sharp, agonizing pain had me screaming, the sedative having no effect other than the needle being nearly as painful as the scalpel.

There was a young couple in the room, separated from me just by a curtain. I say this because on Saturday there was an important event sponsored by several activist groups, including Occupy Seattle. It was National Bank Transfer Day, with people encouraged to withdraw their funds from the national banks and transfer to a local bank or credit union. I had committed to go for support (I transferred my funds some time ago) but declined at the last minute. Apparently many other OS members failed to show. One of the organizers probed why the OS turnout was so low, and I replied that I had a "medical excuse." No details beyond that. She replied to me that she has also been confined by surgery in the past. How did she know it was surgery? This is eating at me. Word seems to get around of everything I do. The only explanations are the young couple, who did look somewhat typical of the OS crowd, or the hospital staff sent the word out. I've had suspicions. I haven't discussed this with anybody else, and it's just too weird to be a coincidence.

Thu., 11/24/2011

I'm becoming a technophobe. I dreamt this week that I finally got myself a mobile phone. Somehow it got under my skin and began crawling. It was alive. Somebody removed it and set it on a table. I picked it right up and started getting an electric shock. The back cover was removed and I saw it had no battery. I continued to clutch it until I woke. Ironically, I learned yesterday a shopping mall back east has begun tracking movements of shoppers via their phones. BB, Inc.

Things aren't going well at work. I've been handling both student and staff calls, but the regular staff don't seem to think I'm doing well on the latter. They want me to switch the phone to conference mode so they can guide me through it. Yesterday I had an appointment, and was trying to hurry through two issues with one of my superiors talking to me at the same time. I worked twenty minutes over my usual shift and missed the bus and appointment.

The appointment was a phone interview with Social Security. I'm applying for SSDI (disability), something I've put off doing for a long time. I have no choice now. My hours are down at work, and my rent has increased at the same time. My choices are to give up the relative stability I now have and take full-time work, take a second job or find a different source of income. I received assistance for several years, but was removed from the rolls on a technicality. I won't give up looking for work, but right now this isn't the best option.

Sat., 12/03/2011

Things are settling at work. I'm getting compliments, and it looks like the help desk will be my regular position from now on. I don't know if this will lead to a reclassification and more pay, but I feel good about the situation for now.

The young Asian woman on the bus is gone. Apparently she finished classes a week early. Over the last couple of days, she seemed to warm up to me, but I'm

not sure. Usually, she sat a couple of rows in front of me, facing the aisle. On Monday, my usual seat was taken, so I sat towards the rear of the bus. She seemed to turn her eyes toward me from time to time. On Tuesday, she sat directly across from me. I wanted to reach out to her, but thought I was fooling myself. Wednesday she was gone.

I received a notice from management that smoking will no longer be allowed on the premises where I live. I can't possibly comply with this, and don't know what I'm going to do about it. I'm angry, but don't have money or resources to move and may be stuck with it.

Sat., 01/14/2012

Something's working. I don't know if the meds have kicked in, or if I'm just on a peak from another mood swing. Those peaks don't usually last this long, and I've given up experimenting with my drugs. I've been feeling good for longer than I can remember, and nothing seems to bring me down.

I was reclassified, and this is a factor. Better pay, although money problems continue at this point, with limited hours in December. My family has been a lot of help, but I can't continue turning to them forever.

With this comes confidence, and in my case moving up closer to women. One in particular is a young Japanese lady at the coffee shop named Hermoko (I hope I have that name right). She has a stunning smile, with her whole face seeming to shine. We've been chatting more, and I'm trying to get the nerve to ask her out, but I haven't quite built up to that yet.

Thu., 02/23/2012

Lately, I've been having sexual fantasies involving a female caretaker in the building. I'm not sure what draws me to her, she's not pretty and she speaks no English. But these fantasies are becoming more and more intense and vivid, and today I can't get her off of my mind. I haven't seen her since I began working the early morning shift last year, this coincides with her hours with my elderly neighbor. I want to get in touch with her, and tried catching her in the hall today, but it seems she had already left. Talking to my neighbor isn't an option, the lady's a loon, and I want to be low-key as possible. I'll try to catch the early bus tomorrow, but that's a long shot. People seem to start calling or wandering in just as I start to wrap up at work.

Sun, 02/25/2012

My sex drive is on steroids these days. The fantasies are continuing around the clock, and I'm rehearsing lines in Vietnamese (just guessing on this) to open up with the caretaker lady. "Toi yeu bon" (I love you), "hay di cung toi" (come with me). I got home early on Friday, but still didn't catch her. I waited 20 minutes by

the elevator, but no show. The crazy woman's daughter showed up, so she might have stayed later than usual.

There's also and elderly Asian lady (what is it with Asian women?), maybe in her 70s, who has a smile that always stuns me, and sometime I'd like to open a dialog with her.

Sat., 03/03/2012

The moment passed. I had Thursday off but by that time the urges had abated, and the caretaker no longer has the appeal that I had seen in her recently. Too bad, she seems like a nice person and not someone to judge me but take me for who I am.

Mon., 03/26/2012

I read a story in the paper about a woman who had spent years searching for her missing brother. What struck me was how much I shared in common with this man. We both attended the Evergreen State College years ago, studied math and physics, were schizophrenic, music was very important. Enjoyed solitude. The woman eventually learned that he had been hit by a train in PA, wandering alone along the tracks I guess. She learned very little about the time he was away from the family. The last eight years of his life are a cloud.

Wed., 04/25/2012

Feeling very excited and optimistic these days. The "training" phase is finally winding down at work, and they're trusting me a lot more. Having some friendly conversations with women, particularly a young woman at the barista at the college. Feels great.

Been thinking a lot about what a strange life I've had. I was incorrigible growing up, going from psych wards and detention to foster homes. I was bitter, angry, scared and lonely in my youth, with no social skills and rarely finding friendship, never love. I'm schizophrenic, alcoholic and epileptic, triple whammy. I'm still a little bit scared. Time to come out of my shell.

Mon., 04/30/2012

Thanh is getting married. She announced this on Facebook, through a photo of a ring on her finger. I was the first to congratulate her, and I do feel happy for her. Wish it could have been me, though. I thought of a time I was chatting with her in the computer lab. She had slipped her shoes off for comfort. *She has beautiful toes!* Short, but not stubby, smooth skin and rounded nails. They were perfect, just as Thanh is.

Mon., 05/07/2012

There's a man at the college who calls the help desk fairly often, always about the same thing: "Why can't I log in/Who's hacking my account?" He called again this morning, and crazy as he sounds to others, I can sympathize. When I mistype my password a couple of times, a panic comes over me, thinking somebody is hacking me. Deep breath and a couple more attempts and I'm in, and the panic is gone. I'm always in fear of being attacked from the Internet, and have been before. Couldn't get by without it, though, so there's a trade-off.

I'm thinking about talking to Michael sometime, next time he calls HD. Sit down and express my sympathy, and give him some tips and reassurance that no one's after him.

Sun., 5/27/2012

Posted on my blues blog:

Dreams can sometimes hit it on the spot. I have a passion or near obsession for music in my life that some people find unbalanced and kind of odd. A dream I had not long ago explains my emotions better than anything else.

I found myself in what seemed to be a medieval castle, with stone masonry and dim lighting. After a few moments, I realized it was actually a prison, with bars in the windows and no apparent way out. Walking around there was a wall with dozens of eyes fixed on me, watching me with a bitter gaze and determined to keep me in my cell. I kept walking around, almost paniced, finally finding a passage to another room. And there was none other than Ringo Starr, smiling at me with his affable manner, giving me relief and releasing me from the distress. I might prefer BB King or Eric Clapton greeting me, but Ringo was probably the most recognizable music figure when I was growing up, and his amiable personality makes him fitting for the part.

I ran toward Ringo and leaped to give him a high-five. He was larger than life, so I had to jump pretty high. I then ran to a door he had left open for me, escaping from my prison.

I play the blues everywhere I go, and might go nowhere without it. It allows me to walk busy sidewalks and ride crowded buses with peace and solitude and gives me the freedom to go anywhere I want. Without it I'm nearly paralyzed and confined to my studio cell.

Can't get my mind off this song now.

[Animated video of Ringo's "Octupus' Garden]

Sat., 6/09/2012

Quite a bit going on recently, I'll try to catch up here. I joined my father and brothers on a trip to the ocean a couple of weeks ago. We spend little time

together, and haven't been very close over the years. There were tense moments, but generally we had a good time and talked a lot, although not of personal or emotional issues. I'm the oldest of four brothers; we're each separated by two years. My first brother, Jeff, and I have had an abrasive relationship, him tending to get angry anytime the topic of discussion turns to anything other than sports. It's partly my fault, I sometimes try to correct him, knowing full well that he resents this.

Jeff and I both have a hard time understanding why others don't see things as we do. I've come to accept this. I know some of my views are extreme, and few people have lived and experienced the world as I have. My acceptance doesn't stop me from trying to persuade people, but it's frustrating sometimes.

Jeff hasn't reached this acceptance. He's always frustrated, and sometimes quick tempered. He was irritated that other people didn't bring razors. One night, the conversation in the bar turned to homeless people. Jeff remarked that they just don't try hard enough. I responded to him, calmly as I could, that I was very near that point several years ago, and would have been alone on the streets myself had it not been for family support. In a huff, he told me that we are each entitled to our opinion.

My next brother, "Joe", has always gone his own way and had an inner peace that I envy. He's the smartest of us. I can discuss almost any subject with him, and conversation can get fascinating. Discussions on politics and drugs stood out the most. Agree or disagree, the conversation can get lively and we both go away thinking about things a little bit differently.

My youngest brother, "Jim", disowned us several years ago, and I haven't had contact with him since. I have an extended family as well.

I worry a little about my father. His short-term memory seems to be lapsing, and I hope this isn't an early sign of alzheimer's. He had a difficult time finding his way around the coastal town, although there were only three or four streets to navigate. Even at the end of four days, he was asking us for directions to get in and out of town. Jeff was irritated by this, and spoke in a sarcastic tone. Dad seemed to want to show us his long-term memory is fine. We drove up the coast to see an Indian village and motel he had visited decades ago.

I wrote the blog post above on the third day, and asked Dad to proofread it. He was moved. He is convinced I am a talented writer and wants me to go professional. He has taken up a project to find a publisher. I'm flattered, but we'll see.

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My neighbor's caretaker was replaced at some point. The current one is an attractive woman, close to my own age (40-ish) and fluent in English, although her accent makes her hard to follow without some effort. After chatting with her

a few times, I decided to ask her to join me for a coffee. I took Monday off from work, otherwise I wouldn't see her until the end of the week, and I had personal business to handle anyway.

She accepted my invitation, then didn't show. I waited 15 minutes, then left. I was disappointed but assumed it was my own fault, a miscommunication maybe. I left her a note the next day, asking her to call me. Nothing else happened until Friday, when I dropped by again and apologized for the first mismatch. She said she'd call me at four, and she seemed sincere.

I was at home the entire afternoon. Then between 3:30 and 4:00, the phone rang. The caller hung up when I said "hello." The phone didn't ring again. Maybe I need to give up on Asian women.

****

I'm sometimes oblivious to my surroundings, especially to how I affect people and how they view me in turn. Been like that all my life. Happened again at work. I tought things were going extremely well and that I was making great progress. Then a couple of weeks ago, my supervisor called me to his office to say that I had been lashing out at co-workers, and that I was often being rude on the phone. He had received two complaints about my behavior, one from a student and one from a teacher. I didn't talk much, I was completely taken by surprise. I've been trying to be more conscious of my actions and their consequences, but this has been stressful for me. I'll be glad when the quarter ends next week, a week off is needed right now.

Wed., 6/13/2012

The caretaker finally called yesterday. We met up and went to a coffee bar, but the conversation didn't go very well. She couldn't understand most of what I was saying. I had a little trouble listening to her, too. We stayed for about 30 minutes when she asked me if I had a car. I told her I didn't have any use for one. She wanted to leave a few minutes later.

She gave me a phone number. Turned out it didn't take calls. Don't know if this would have worked with the language barrier, anyway.

Sat., 6/16/2012

I'm gaining confidence, and I think I'll finally approach the friendly young lady at the coffee bar. Unsure of her name, she told me at one time but it went right past me. I noticed she took a break around seven. I'll try to be there around that time tomorrow.

I'm having lunch with my father today. Father's Day is tomorrow. He wants to discuss my persuing writing, based on my blog post. He sees this as a "poem,"

and believes it should be published. If he can find a taker, that's great, but I think he's a little starry-eyed.

Sun., 7/15/2012

The young woman at the coffee shop told me she is leaving today. She's not going far, just across the lake to Bellevue. I don't go in that direction except to commute to work, so this would be the last time I see her. I've been kicking myself for months, trying to get the nerve to hit on her, to strike a real conversation beyond the polite chatter we have at the counter, lasting for a couple minutes or so. I don't know a lot about her, but she's a student and a mother, very friendly and with a stunning smile.

After she told me this I went to my table as I always do, a little sad and angry with myself. I'd let another opportunity pass me by. Then I realized there was no reason I couldn't jump on the moment. The line at the counter had disapated, and she wasn't very busy. But I slipped back into my old ways, and finished my coffee without a peep. As I walked out, a crowd had poured in and I stopped to look at her, thinking this would be the last time, then left quietly.

I went to the grocery store and the drug store to stock up on food and cigarettes. The bus was late and the wait was long. I was listening to some R&B. Aretha Franklin, Respect. The Five Stairsteps, Ooh Child. Very comforting and encouraging. I finally turned around and returned to the coffee shop. She was on her way out, leaving early I guess. I told her I couldn't stand the thought of never seeing her again, and gave her my contact card. Asked her to please call me. It's in her court now. I didn't get her number, but I have hope she'll call. I won't lose sleep waiting, though.

Thu., 8/23/2012

Tough times right now. I received a double hit at work. First I learned that I would be laid off for six weeks, no pay, during the Summer school break. Then my supervisor took me aside to give me a final warning on my manner on the phone. Pretty overwhelming. I'm applying for work, but I'm not really sure where to go. In all these years I've spent at the college, I'm not really good at what I do. People find me rude and abrasive. I draw blanks sometimes, even on easy tasks, or start taking people in the wrong direction. But, I don't know what else I would do. It's familiar, the environment comfortable, the people are congenial. I struggle in adjusting to new faces and settings. A new occupation would most certainly mean a drastic cut in pay, too.

The time off is giving me too much time on my hands. I'm bored, and depressed thinking about my job dilemma. I get out for a walk once or twice a day, but mainly I'm home on my computer, spending a lot of time on Facebook and reading up on politics and the elections. It's sinking in to me that work is my whole life, and that's not healthy. I've inquired on doing volunteer work on a couple of elections, and we'll see what comes of that.

Tue., 11/06/2012

"And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music" -- Nietzche

Wow. Really touches on my life.

I've been back to work for about a month. Things are going well there, maybe too well. I don't feel an urgency to find a better situation. I keep thinking about the old joke about the farmer with a leaky roof. Can't fix it when it's raining, no reason to fix it on a nice day.

My music blog is on the back burner. I've been writing on a new blog, a political cause promoting third party candidates in the elections. Posting a lot of politics on Facebook, too. People generally seem to ignore me, or at least seldomly reply. The blog isn't getting much traffic, either. But I feel better for doing it. It's too important to me to be silent, especially with important elections coming today.

My time off put me way behind on my bills, and I'm working with charity for help on my rent. It's been a lengthy process, and I don't know what they'll be able to provide, but I'm hopeful I'll get through this.

Fri., 11/09/2012

I'm fired. I had a difficult caller on the help desk, who accused me of being sarcastic and got frustrated when I asked him questions to get a better picture of his situation. I tried to escalate the call, but there was nobody to answer. The whole thing was a disaster, and my manager wouldn't give me any more chances, right or wrong. I think he's wanted to see me leave for a while now, and now I'm gone.

Still owe back rent, and it looks like last month's bill will come out of my pocket. This will really set me back, unless I can find another job quickly. I don't know what it will be, having just been fired will not reflect well.

Sat., 12/01/2012

Trying an online dating service. My self-description:

"I have a paradoxical personality. I'm shy but passionate, intense but free-spirited. I'm a computer geek and a technophobe. I'm a socialist with a libertarian streak. I'm cynical but an idealist. I love people but sometimes I find it hard to let things go. Sometimes these things conflict, forming barriers. But sometimes they overlap, creating a smooth path for creative and enriching engagements."

Sat., 12/08/2012

I was at the medical clinic this week, and I can't get my mind off of the women there. There was Nu, who checked me in, a quiet young lady with a beautiful smile and soft voice. We chatted briefly. Then there was Twee (I'm sure the spelling is off), very talkative and led me all the way to the door. Was she making a pass at me? In between there was my doctor, whom I already have a crush for. I want to return soon. I've made a resolution to quit smoking on Jan. 1st, maybe this will be a good excuse.

Sat., 1/26/2013

My fondness for Asian women isn't hard to explain. I always find that they have a friendly and gentle personality that makes me feel welcome, kind of thaws my frozen heart. Gives me strength to reach out, something that's always been a struggle for me.

Thu., 2/07/2013

My time off from work has been rejuvenating, and given me a calm and peaceful inner feeling that I haven't had in as long as I can remember. Maybe since my childhood. I just don't recall feeling this good before. Unfortunately I'll soon have to return to the job grind, and I'm sure this will pass. Maybe I'll find something similar to the college. It was stressful there for me, but tolerable, and I liked the atmosphere.

This time is an opportunity for me, to reach out to someone and maybe find a soulmate. I haven't taken advantage.

The elder woman with the cute care takers has left. Her situation had deteriorated to the point that the care takers could not be of help to her any more. They couldn't be there 24x7.

A job interview went very well today, although it was with a recruiter, and not an employer. But the best thing about it was that I finally realized all I need to say to handle the question on my dismissal is the truth. I had gotten stubborn about escalating people to the next tier, wanting to do what I could to resolve the issue first. This led to complaints, and I was given a warning. Sometime later there was a situation that deteriorated and my supervisor told me it was time to go. Not necessarily bad, but an experience that I've learned from and maybe some employer will see it that way too.

Tue., 2/12/2013

I'm 51 but I have the sex drive of a young teenager. Not much more experience at that. What I get are fantasies and uncontrollable urges, and a lot of porn. My shyness and awkwardness hold me back from initiating and developing a relationship that might satisfy my needs, and when I open up I tend to be in for disappointment. I suppose most people have been disappointed before, more

than once, but it takes me so much time to build trust and confidence, I don't know that there will ever be another chance.

Tue., 3/05/2013

Feeling good, but cautious. Still haven't found work and Saturday will make it four months. On the other hand, I'm relaxed and not having the usual money problems, as unemployment insurance and food stamps are more steady than my paycheck was at the college. There were periods of unpaid leave and 'holidays' there that made some checks thin and made it a struggle to get by.

I'm beginning to wonder if Dr. Tu has similar feelings for me as I have for her. Our conversations don't go far beyond the usual patient-doctor line, but we see each other somewhat frequently, every three months. Unusual, a normal interval would be six or twelve months. I mentioned in our session last week that I need to find a soul mate to help get me over smoking. She quickly replied that can cause more stress than being alone. She then scheduled me again in two months.

Sat., 4/27/2013

I got tired of walking downtown every day. Just got too repetitious. I've been hanging out at a cafe down the street, and hopping on a bus and going to one on Capitol Hill. There's a beautiful young woman named Nina at the latter, and I think we're hitting it off. She was a little nervous this morning, but we had a friendly chat. She works Sundays, and I'm determined to go there tomorrow and ask her to lunch. I feel pretty confident about this, and am hopeful something will develop from it.

Sun., 5/05/2013

Overheard while waiting for the bus after a coffee this morning:

(Laughter)
"Again?!?"
"He doesn't do anything."

I've been a little bothered by this today, partly because there's some truth to it, but it's also giving me the creepy feeling that people are watching me and talking. I don't handle this well, but maybe it'll blow over. I might have to stay away from Capitol Hill for a couple of days.

Fri., 5/08/2013

Out for a walk on a sunny day, listening to Janeva Magness and getting spontaneous sexual urges. The barista looks especially cute today. I stammer while talking to her. I sit and think of the care taker I won't see again. The elder lady who brings me a cake occasionally is looking very attractive.

My efforts to quit smoking have been futile. I've been lying to my doctor about this, telling her that that I've lasted a few days, when I actually don't get past a few hours. I just don't want to disappoint her. The problem is smoking is one of the few things I have to enjoy in my life; music and computers are the others. Without someone to support me, beyond a weekly group session, it's not something I have the power to do.

Sat., 5/18/2013

I'm having a good laugh tonight. My profile picture on Facebook is a humorous photo of a man in a tin foil hat. I love the picture, it reflects on my feelings on privacy and on my mental condition. Then it just occurred to me this evening, I wear a baseball cap and music headphones every where I go. They give me a certain comfort. Like a tin foil hat. I wonder how many people have caught this before.

Sun., 5/19/2013

I'm tired, and have a lot on my mind. I guess I'll try to pour it out here. I haven't been sleeping well the past week, waking at 6AM. I guess it's the early daybreak. I should close the curtains when I go to bed. This is compounded this weekend by going without my psych meds. They help me sleep better and think more clearly. I forgot to pick them up on Friday, and need to get to the pharmacy ASAP on Monday.

I finally caught Nina today, and asked her if we could talk sometime when she was free. She was very uncomfortable, and gave me a lame excuse about separating her work from her personal life. She then began banging things around, as if angry. She walked away, although I waited a minute to see if she would return. I told her good bye, but she would have nothing more to do with me, and would not look in my direction. She was pretty immature, and I guess my expectations weren't that high anyway. Too bad, but she doesn't look like someone I'd like to have anything to do with.

Phone calls and interviews are pouring in for work. The timing is perfect, I'm at the end of my eligibility for unemployment insurance this week. I can request an extension, but I hope that's not necessary. With austerity cuts my check would be reduced drastically. I've already taken a recent cut in food stamps.

I'm excited about one job prospect. It's with the University of Washington, and located at the hospital next door to me. Kind of a graduation. It would be challenging, especially the hours. I have to be flexible and ready to work all shifts. I have an interview scheduled Tuesday afternoon. I have another interview that morning, at an inconvenient location. It will take most of the morning, and I hope it doesn't drain me.

I met with my brother Joe last night, for some suggestions and tips. He's in software development and although he doesn't interview people, he had some

useful ideas. In particular, initiating a conversation. I'm writing questions for this purpose, and thinking of possible anecdotes from my time at Bellevue College. Funny, I have a hard time remembering specific cases there. Nothing really stands out, it was all routine to me. I guess there was the guy who always forgot his password, and believed that someone else was changing it. I can identify with that. He came to the desk every few weeks, making the same claim. I helped him out, reassuring him there was noone manipulating his account, and he'd be on his way. Then there was one incident where a student was upset that another student was watching porn on a computer in the lab. I couldn't blame him, but by policy set by student government, he was entitled to his porn.

The ticket went through three people, who weren't very clear in their explanations, and the student was getting frustrated. I picked it up, gave the student details on lab policy, with a slant for internet freedom. That was it. He sent one more email, thanking us and saying what a great job we do, and saying that we were "amazing." That blew me away.

Wed., 5/22/2013

The interviews were mixed. The morning interview, it turns out, was for a job with a credit union. Location aside, this would be a great company to work for. A non-profit, and I like the concept of co-ops. The interview was a breeze. Not so much at the hospital. I was stumped on a basic question on validation, and my eventual answer gave made them laugh. One of the three just didn't seem to like me for some reason. I can't think of the reason. Did I fail to shake her hand? Did I give her an awkward look? Whatever, she wore an unhappy and disapproving look throughout the hour.

Thu., 5/23/2013

Feeling frustrated and depressed right now. My father emailed me this morning to ask if I'd like to do some office work for him, filing papers. Not something I usually do, nor desire to do. I should do it anyway, just to do some "busy work." But then he called me this afternoon to offer me a fulltime job, doing precisely that above. He went on to tell me what I am doing isn't working, and I need to try something else. Basically he feels I'm not going to get any other offer. He's never understood what I do, although I've told him many times. It never sinks into him. This time I sent him a copy of my resume, along with information on the current market rate, and asked him if HE thought this was a good idea. Wait and see. I'll see him on Monday.

Thu., 6/06/2013

After a rush on interviews and phone calls for a couple of weeks, I wanted a break, and I got it. I don't know what to do with my time right now. I'm sending out resumes, but not doing anything to mention, just hanging around the apartment and avoiding going out, especially avoiding spending money. My eligibility for unemployment insurance expired last week and I'm now on

"emergency" status, with a 20% reduction in benefits. I've spent some time with Teresa, she's usually a pleasure to talk to, although she can carry on about her own health problems for long stretches. Not that I don't care, but sometimes she can be very self-important. I listen. She's a very nice woman to talk to, generally, and I enjoy her dog Simba. Teresa rescued him from an abusive household years ago, and he's now a very happy, lovable animal. He's 16 years old, but he plays like a puppy when I'm around.

I went to Dad's and he still seemed bent on having me join him in real estate. I started to listen patiently, with my lips curled as I tried to keep a smile. Did this for about five minutes before we broke into a brief argument. He was hurt, and I gave him a hug. He said he just wanted to show me what he does. I told him I know that already. I worked for him years ago, and was miserable doing it. He agreed. We then went to his computer, and he asked for help in managing his email. He planned to send a bulk message and didn't want the replies mixed with his inbox. I showed him how to create a filter. I later created a presentation and a PDF documentation with details. I called him a week later, and he hadn't followed through. He said he will be seeing somebody else to guide him through it. I think he may be a little intimidated just because of the length of the procedure.

Hearing news today that I've long known. The government is spying on us! Gee, who would'a thought? Now it's in the mainstream media and official.

Wed., 7/03/2013

I moved my computers around this weekend and needed to do some tinkering to get them back up on the network. The first one was a breeze. I gave up on the second one after a few hours and trying everything I could think of. When I got up the next morning, something had changed. It was connected again, but I didn't know how it had happened. I joked on the Linux forum about "invisible penguins." Since then, though, I've been bothered by the thought that maybe someone remoted into my computer and set me up. I don't know what else they might do.

Tue., 7/30/2013

A quote from Osho, an Indian mystic: "The real question is not whether there is life after death. The real question is whether you are alive before death."

I need more of the latter.

Sun., 8/31/2013

I've been busy on my web log lately. I'm pointing employers to it, promoting myself as "self employed" as a webmaster and writer. These skills are very relevant in my job search, and having been nearly a year since leaving the college, this takes care of my time away. Unfortunately there isn't a lot of traffic

there at this time, and I need to do more to promote it. I put up a Facebook page. Maybe this will raise some interest.

I've been writing frequently about Mike Zito, a blues artist from Missouri and a recovering drug addict. Makes me think about how the blues helped carry me through my recovery from alcohol and through good and bad times since. He's becoming an idol to me, with his determination and energy. He's touring with a new band, recently released a solo album, produced another album and writing his own blog about his experiences. I couldn't match his virility, but he's someone to look up to.

My step mother had a stroke recently. She's been angry about it, as I would be. We don't know if she'll ever have full use of her arm and leg yet, but her recovery is slowly coming along. This has been extremely hard on my father. The in-laws seem to be blaming him, and have even gone so far as to suggest that Barb should move in with them. He's trying to keep a positive attitude, and I'm giving him as much support as I can. Telling him I love him, if nothing else.

I'm out of funds for unemployment insurance. I'm at the end of my three month emergency extension, and because the unemployment rate has dropped below a threshold. I cannot get a second extension. I'm already borrowing heavily from family. Don't know what I'll do about this yet.

Sat., 9/07/2013

I guess I'm eligible for an emergency extension after all. That's a relief, but I'm almost out of time. I have to consider doing something else, non-tech, maybe a customer service job. This will inevitably involve a cut in pay as well as a loss of pride. If I were going to get back into IT, something would have happened by now. My confidence is low, and I'm not interviewing well, and it's time to move on to something else.

Post on my blog:

Mike Zito‘s blog makes me think back on my early days of recovery from alcohol. It was 20 years ago, my life had never been rosy, but it was now spiraling and out of control. I couldn’t keep a job. My diet was ramen noodles and a case of beer. I was always on the edge, between having a roof over my head and sleeping in a doorway. Neighbors were shaming me for being a lush and having no real life. I had other serious personal issues, but my drinking was covering these up, keeping me in denial.

Then my father offered to pay for me to complete my degree. Something lit up, and I immediately took him up on his offer. I knew I had to make some changes if I were to pursue this. I had to stop drinking in particular. And I stopped. Haven’t had a drink since then. I was a little flaky in school, but I got through it. I had some wild relapse dreams, but no temptation after day one.

The “other” things then hit me hard. I had to build a support network, first family, then counseling, and one more thing: My brother gave me a cassette player to carry with me, along with a few tapes: Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf and Tom McFarland. This was kind of new to me. I’d loved the blues of Eric Clapton and Duane Allman, but this opened up a new world in a time of need. I hope I still have the tapes around. They would be a valuable memento to look back on. I think I’ll search around for them this weekend.

Wed., 9/11/2013

My stepmother's illness is coming down harder on Dad than I thought. His behavior has been more and more bizarre over the last couple of years, but I'm afraid he's about broken now. His relationship with Barb was deteriorating even before this situation came. He told me she had threatened him with a knife at one point. She got counseling, but her daughter Cyndy had bad feelings about this and blamed Dad for what had gone wrong. Now with Barb in the care center, her mental state is unstable and Dad will not allow anyone to visit her, even Cyndy. Needless to say, she and her husband are angry. I'm hearing stories from Dad that I can't confirm, but I trust him and know Cyndy can be bitchy at times.

He's sharing his personal email correspondence with Cyndy with the rest of us, a practice I've asked him not to do previously. The messages tend to be personal attacks. I made a personal suggestion to him and he shared that as well. It prompted a response to myself and my brothers and sister Lori, from Cyndy's husband. Dad somehow got wind of this email, and is demanding to see it. He's been told "no," and now intends to drive it out of Jeff B. (Cyndy's husband).

I'm supporting him as much as I can, calling him every day to see how he's doing and keeping positive thoughts. But after talking to him this morning, I'm afraid he's beginning to have partanoid delusions. He sees Cyndy and Jeff as a threat, and is trying to make people take sides. Before today he's had a fairly positive tone in my conversations with him, but now he's angry and scared. Lori has seen this all along, but I'm just coming around today. We'll have to get together to discuss this.

I recall an article stating that 97% of women remain with their partners through long-term ilness. For men the figure is around 75%. I wonder if Dad is in the latter group.

Wed., 9/18/2013

I can't sleep without my psych meds. Went without them last night and was up until 7AM. Took a nap then, but had a phone interview this morning and had to be up for that. I wasn't very sharp, but I passed. It's for a temp job. Two or three weeks. I'll take what I can get.

People were looking at me pathetically on my way to the pharmacy this morning. I can't be tired? I looked at myself in the mirror to see what they were looking at. I looked normal. Don't know what it was about.

I'm going to try to take another nap. I'm expecting another call later, don't know the time, I didn't ask. I'm assuming it will be this afternoon.

Second call came when I was asleep. I think they're pretty desperate at this point, he sounded like he wanted to hire me no matter what I said.

Tue., 9/24/2013

Dad's got me worried. He's alienated all of the in-laws. His incoherent emails are now blocked by that part of the family. Cyndy pointed out that he's losing weight. Lori doesn't feel that he's thinking the situation out with the house. He's constantly charging that Cyndy and the in-laws are trying to manipulate Barb and to damage him personally. Most recently he sent a message to his lawyer, and forwarded to the rest of us. In it he charged that Cyndy had coaxed Barb into signing a paper of some kind. Barb's incohorent and in no condition to sign anything. The email was hard to read. He kept referring to a "Sell," which turned out to be Barb's cellphone.

I've tried to arrange a meeting with Tom, but he doesn't seem interested. The information I get is one-sided, or second-hand. Barb's in no condition to discuss this. She and Dad are seeing a psych, but I think that's focused on Barb's health. Dad's almost alone right now. I'm doing odd jobs for him, mainly clerical-type work, and that makes him feel good. Just to have someone around. He likes to feed me lunch while I'm there. I'm not doing enough though.

Sat., 10/12/2013

Time is running out. If I don't get a job soon, I'll be in deep trouble. Last week was hectic, I had several interviews and the phone didn't stop ringing. This should be a good thing, but I had so many other things to take care of ASAP it really wore on me. Being out of work for so long, I'm not used to a busy schedule like this. Everything did get done, and I feel good about that.

Dad still can't get over Jeff B's email. Yesterday he accused me of being more "loyal" to Jeff than to him. It started with a phone message in which he said I had told him I was upset and that he is "off his rocker." I called and told him that all I had said was I am concerned about his memory. It sooned turned to the email from there. He doesn't understand that email is not a public forum. He shares an account with Barb, and freely forwards his correspondence with others. No matter if I share Jeff's message with him anyway, in his state of mind I'm sure he would be upset by it.

Mon., 10/28/2013

I'm running out of patience with Dad. His comments that I'm "not backing him 100%" are really rubbing on me, given the effort I've made to support him in these times. I call him every day, listen to what he has to say, give him words of encouragement. But he keeps reminding me of Jeff's email, or that I once told him he was starting to sound paranoid. Yesterday he went on a long-winded rage about Cyndy, who visited Barb, but not on Dad's terms. He needs help that I can't offer him. He's not in a state of mind to consider this, but I've spoken to Lori about an intervention. This has gone nowhere.

Tue., 11/05/2013

Ah, Mondays. I spent the weekend sharpening my coding and scripting skills to prepare for a contract job interview at Google. It took me over an hour to find a feasible route to take. Google Maps first suggested a long, complicated walking path from the bus stop, but I eventually pinned it down switching between Google and the transit website, and changing input. Must have taken me an hour. I left an hour early so as not to be rushed.

The bus was held up for ten or fifteen minutes by road work. Still made the bus transfer, and was 30 minutes early. Had a coffee next door to kill time. When I came to the building it was locked down, and the security guard was chatting on the phone. I waited five minutes for him to let me in. He directed me into an empty room of rooms, with only one of about a dozen offices occupied. I waited another five or ten minutes, and finally met my contact, Pam. Nice woman, and very business-like, more so than most interviewers I've met. We spoke for about 30 minutes, though she did most of the talking. The result was discouraging. Pam bluntly told me my coding experience probably wouldn't meet expectations. I wasn't up to making a case for myself.

The ride home was longer. One driver passed me, and the last leg was on a packed bus, standing shoulder-to-shoulder. The trip ended up taking over six hours. Six hours and nothing really accomplished. I put way too much time and effort into this, and in the future I'll have to take a more balanced approached. It would have been a good job, but high-stress, and a high learning curve. It wasn't worth it. I could have spent the last three days getting my resume out to other employers for jobs more in my line. I learned that much.

Thu., 11/07/2013

Received an eviction notice for smoking in my apartment today. This policy has been in place for about a year, and I've mostly ignored it. If I'm going to quit smoking, it will be on my terms, not the housing administration or some do-gooder in Olympia. People and policies like these make me inclined to continue smoking both out of principle and spite.

Sun., 11/09/2013

I have finally been offered a job. I really wanted to turn it down; it's a ten hour midnight shift, and at this point, I'd just as soon wait and see if I qualify for Social Security disability. I applied last week. It would take a load off of me. I have to get some money coming inm though, and this is a start. It's a 90-day contract migrating a corporate office to Windows 7. The hours concern me. I haven't worked full-time in at over 20 years.

Fri., 11/15/2013

My new employer really likes to test its new staff. Recent days have been spent filling forms, going to orientations and answering more questions. The was to be a conference call this morning and a training session this afternoon. The job has been delayed for three weeks, though, and while I'm partly relieved, I don't have anything to show for the hours I've put into this job already. They were to pay me $20 for the orientation, but at this point I'm not sure where the time card is right now. I have no way of claiming it. Had a drug test this afternoon. It's getting very intrusive, signing release forms to a company I'm starting to have second thoughts about.

Fri., 11/29/2013

I begin work on Monday. I've been trying to adjust myself to the late hours, cat napping during the day and staying up until 2 or 3 am. It gets pretty boring at night. My days aren't very exciting, but after 10 the darkness, the lack of company and little activity on social sites make the time go slow. Big difference is I'll be busy next week.

Still worried about going to the working grind. I'm used to having a lot of free time, and the last year has made me fell relaxed and much better about myself, and going to full time work is no doubt going to change this. I'm worried about switching from having too much time to having no time. I'm worried about depression, stress, seizures, loss of sleep. I've finished forms for SSDI and will find out soon if I am eligible. It will be a hard decision to make, assuming it comes through.

Mon., 12/02/2013

I began work this afternoon. Thankfully, they aren't asking me to return until tomorrow. I was worried, there was no way I was going to get any sleep in between, and by the time it was over, I would have gone over 24 hours. It's 11PM now, I'll be up late and crash in the morning hours. Just had a cappuccino, that will get me along for a while.

I've been thinking about my early years of employment. Never had anything I was happy with, but I made a game out of being the hardest worker. Not being the smartest, not doing the best job, but working harder than anybody else. My coworkers hated me for this, and for my asocial behavior. Bosses were initially impressed, but grew tired of me after a while, and if I hadn't already burned out

in a few months, I was shown the door. It took ten, fifteen years for me to realize this wouldn't get me anyplace. My attitude changed after being on disability for a year or two. I gave up drinking, addressed my mental health issues, and I was a changed person when I returned to the workforce. I'm still a loner, and still have social issues, but I'm more of a team player now, and not as reluctant to connect and interact with others in the workplace. I've actually made a few friends.

Fri., 12/6/2013

The first week of employment had mixed results. The work isn't particularly rewarding, I'm simply following a script in backing up users' data and upgrading their machines. There's some new stuff for me, and it will look good on a resume, assuming I stick it out. The first couple of days I was getting almost no sleep, maybe an hour or two. I didn't feel tired, though. I knew it would catch up to me, and it came hard. I missed work the third day. I got on the wrong bus, headed for Tacoma. I only realized it when we were off the route for the Bellevue bus, and couldn't get back in time to switch. At late night, these buses run only once an hour. I was left to wait an hour in the freezing cold, calling in late. I called in sick instead. Bad way to start a job, but I'm not sorry I did it.

There are plainly too many managers. They have a Byzantine bureaucracy with shift managers, site managers, hiring managers, and I'm not sure what else. I've gone through different people through at each phase of every process. I've created three accounts, each with a different purpose, and each causing more frustrations. The most important one, used for logging hours, has a complex procedure that must have been created in the early 90s, and no one has bothered to upgraded it since then. My absence yesterday went through three people, my shift manager Juan, and two women who I have not met and whose positions and authority I am clueless about.

One of the shift managers posts letters praising him all over the wall. It's completely covered. The letters are at eye level, where workers view them every every time they look up from their computer. All I can think, is he so insecure that he needs to force these on everybody constantly? I can certainly understand him being proud, and posting one or two would be appropriate, but plastering the walls is going overboard and strikes me as a sign of insecurity.

I'll be glad to have money coming in, but I don't want to do this long. Three months is pushing it. I can only look at these "certificates of praise" for so long.

Sun., 12/08/2013

I'm adjusting to the darkness. The night sky and the calm are kind of pleasant. Tonight I'm listening to the blues on the radio until midnight, maybe hear some jazz afer that. It's Sunday night, and I don't have any deadlines, so I'm pretty relaxed. I could do this regularly.

Sat., 12/14/2013

The loss of sleep has caught up to me. Three day weekends aren't so great when you spend 24 hours passed out on the couch, too tired and weak to get up and enjoy your time off. I couldn't build up enough energy just to go to the grocery store. The last two hours at work were spent nodding off, with nothing to do there on a Friday morning. I tagged alonng with my boss to deliver some packages across the campus, and met a couple new faces, but didn't talk much and got the feeling he'd rather I wasn't there.

The situation at work isn't going well. I'm not getting along, my work is sloppy and I just don't feel comfortable in a corporate setting. The song "We've Gotta Get out of this Place" keeps coming to my mind. I prefer public service to profit incentives, especially when the benefactors of those profits are people in Manhattan suites, far removed from the burdens and hardships of the working class they employ. I've become bitter over the years over our corporate and consumerist culture, and have seperated myself from it as much as is possible. I get a feeling at times tgat I just shouldn't be here.

My co-workers are very nice people, but I'm the kind of person who needs to draw boundaries. One young woman, Lei. rides along with me on the bus and joins me in the cafeteria before work. She's very nice, but I just need that time to myself, listening to music, reading the news and contemplating my day. I usually stop by a coffee bar or cafe on my way to work, where I'm generally left alone. I don't have this during these late hours. She wants to chat with me, and I try to be polite, and make an excuse, like going out for a cigarette. Trouble is she smokes too.

The other one is a man in his 60s who just won't mind his own business. Anytime there's a lull on his computer, he'll watch mine or Lei's , making dumb comments or suggesions, being a self-appointed expert. Like myself, he was out of work for a year, and, not so much like me, hopes to make an opportunity of this, seeking something long-term. He wears a tie, and takes notes whenever the supervisor gathers us for special instruction. Nothing wrong with this, except that he always makes a point of noting that he's noting it. "I'm writing that in my notebook." Okay.

The shift supervisor is a very nice guy, very patient, but the last few days he's been expressing his own frustration with the company and hinting that our situation is bleak and that we might consider moving on, or find a better contractor. I don't disagree with him.

Thu., 12/19/2013

My application for Social Security Disability was denied. I don't think I'll appeal this. I'm going to be in the present situation for a while, at least three months. Unless my attitude wears out my welcome. I don't know where I'll go from there. My first paycheck may raise my spirits, it should be in the mail on Monday. But I haven't paid the rent this month, and there's Christmas. The shop will be closed

for most of the holidays, and I have to stretch it out. I may have to resort to borrowing money again. It's hard to break the cycle.

Sat., 12/28/2013

These late hours are beginning to get boring. Teresa appears to be out, or not well enough to be up. She's not a very healthy woman. I've knocked on her door a couple of times, but her lights are out and there's no answer. With some inspiration, I might use the time to be creative, doing some writing or programming, both things I gotten away from for a very long time. I have a book I borrowed from my brother, 'Founding Fathers,' which I haven't gotten around to reading yet and have no desire to read right now. It's been on the table for months now.

Christmas was all right. I didn't spend much time at my sister's, leaving at the first chance. It's not that I wasn't enjoying myself; as I'm not sleeping nights, I was tired and burned out, and needed to get home. Best part of the day: Barb had her first outing since her stroke. You could see she was having a great time, although she was pretty confined while there. I don't think she noticed.

New Year's is never a big deal to me. I don't party, and never saw the changing of the calendar as anything special. There are good football games, though.

Listening to the music of Samantha Fish. That's a lift. I guess I'm writing, too. This time isn't a total waste.

1/01/2014

Midnight, January 1st, 2014. Whoopee!

Went into a sort of zen state at work yestreday. Installed Windows on four mini desktops in the course of about two hours. I had two monitors, keyboards and mice, with two computers at each station. Usually there are long waits at certain points: The image and the updates in particular. But at each phase, I had another computer ready to go. I began to close out the rest of the world. My world was myself and those computers. It was fun. Four seems to be the perfect number for this.

1/16/2014

The headaches are starting to overwhelm me. They had been lasting 20 to 30 minutes, now they're stretching on for hours. I went to bed in pain but slept for eight or nine hours, waking still in pain and late for work. I called in sick. The headache subsided soon after. I didn't think to set the alarm. I hadn't needed it up to this point.

I have the feeling my supervisor isn't happy with the job I'm doing. Not fast enough for him, and he's quick to step in. I don't do as well with somebody literally looking over my shoulder.

I missed a couple of appointments, one with my nurse and the other with my shrink. I have to talk to somebody about these headaches. I can't continue doing this. I just don't have a choice. It's the only offer I had after a year, and my unemployment benefits have ended. I don't have any other ideas.

1/17/2014

Saw my nurse today. The discussion turned to SSDI and appealing the decision. She didn't seem to think that the headaches were directly related to my psychotic neurosis, or at least that the person reviewing the case wouldn't see it that way. I've rescheduled with my psychiatrist, and she sent him an email explaining my situation. Right now, if I could get on disability, I would take it right away.

Work was pretty light. In addition to my absence, a guy quit yesterday and they were short handed. I finished my assigned job in a few hours, and spent most of the shift goofing off. My supervisor could have found more work, but it was Friday and everyone was a little goofy and laid back, looking forward to the weekend. Lei was getting high on energy drinks, and that was the epitome of the evening.

I tried changing my routine, sitting in the lobby instead of the cafeteria to have a little time alone before work. This did calm me. I can listen to music, read the news without others feeling I'm ignoring them. It's silly that I have to go to lengths to avoid people, riding a different bus and so forth. I just need that time. I'll see the same people for ten straight hours, and we can talk then. Am I selfish?

1/28/2014

I'm fighting a cold, it's pouring rain, and I overslept again, waking up with another headache. I set the alarm but must have slept through it. If I'd hurried, I could catch the last bus, but for this job it just isn't worth it. Called in sick. I have yet to work 40 hours in a given week, being "punctually" late or absent. I'm bracing for a call or email from the project manager tomorrow, possibly for my release. That wouldn't be a bad thing, it's taking a toll on me, and I need to find a better situation. I don't have anything to fall back on in between. It will be interesting.

1/29/2014

Got the news I was expecting today, via a conference call. I'm relieved of my duties, and I'm really relieved. I didn't appeal. I don't know what I'll do next, but I have a few days and another paycheck in the mail to let me relax and meditate.

Talked to Dad on the phone, thinking he'd be very disappointed. He had nothing but words of encouragement, and even offered to help me financially. I'm lucky to have the family ties I do.

2/04/2014

I've been off work for a week but the headaches persist. Not as frequent, but still very painful and very frustrating. I saw a doctor, and she felt eye strain was probably the cause, and that made sense. I'd been staring at small monitors with high resolutions, and it was really a strain to read the details. The print on the worksheets was pretty small, too. Over-the-counter glasses helped, but it was hard to get in the habit of carrying those with me. But I've been away from that for a week, and it's seeming less likely that this is the source of the problem. I just can't think what it could be.

2/06/2014

Teresa was in pain yesterday, and needed to see her doctor at the medical center next door. She was struggling, and I escorted her, grabbing a wheelchair along the way and giving her company as she waited a the clinic. It was a good feeling, doing something to help someone else, taking my mind off of my own problems for a few hours.

2/14/2014

I've decided to pursue the SSDI (disability) route. Things are calm right now, but returning to work would be a mistake for my health. I was deteriorating at the college, and this recent job was a disaster. I've been fired twice in a row for things that are beyond my control. I have a doctor, a social worker and a lawyer supporting me in this, and that should be enough to get me through it. I don't know how much time it will take, but I have a little bit of money in the bank and have applied for cash assistance from the state. That won't be much, less than $200. Hope this moves quickly.

The headaches are gone. Haven't had one in a week.

3/06/2014

Making progress on the disability claim. For now, there will be state assistance, including food, cash and medical. The cash amount will be small. I'll have to try to get through on that until my SSDI claim is cleared. Switching to e-cigarettes will cut costs considerably. Smoking is my second or third biggest expense, after food and rent. The latter is reduced to a minimum until I have an income source again. Public housing is a great accommodation to have. I don't know how I got through these times before.

3/12/2014

I've been cleared for state disability assistance. My debit card has been credited $140, and this will increase to about $200 a month in April. Food stamps will bring it to about $390, aboout half what I used to earn at the college. Not enough to get by on but better than nothing. I'm not ready to give up cigarettes, but this may not be my choice to make. I'm trying to switch over to e-cigs, they're cheaper and nicotine-free. It isn't an easy adjustment to make.

I have very little contact outside these days. Aside from my morning walk to the Coffee Tree down the street, and Facebook, I have no contact with the world. In a way that's comforting to me, but it isn't healthy and I need to get engaged and stimulated. There's a march for the $15 minimum wage this weekend, something I have strong feelings about, and I'm planning to join that. I've generally avoided these events, aside from Occupy, not doing well in crowds. Maybe this will be a little different.

3/14/2014

Not sure what I'm going to do tomorrow. My nurse/therapist is urging me to go to the rally, as well as to a different coffee house than Coffee Tree. Walk a little more, see new people. The rally starts at Judkins Park at 1PM. I'm not feeling motivated right now, but one thing can lead to another.

3/16/2014

Couldn't bring myself to attend the march or rally yesterday. I watched the clock, and as the time passed, the prospect of being in a crowded wave of people seemed more than I was ready to handle. I heard a woman shame me at the bus stop, or so it seemed. I tried to ignore her, but as so often it ate at me for hours.

I went to Capitol Hill this morning for the first time in weeks, it seems. I've been avoiding that and doing my shopping at the expensive store on the corner. I always feel like I'm the center of attention when I go there, not necessarily in a bad way, but I prefer my anonymity.

The clock is ticking for Dad and Barb. He is set on her moving into the house in May, but almost nobody feels this is a good idea for either of them. I'm corresponding with family via email to develop a tactful way to get them out of this. I can't persuade him personaly, when I try to point a problem with his plan, he insists he's considered it and brushes it off. He'll even lie to me. He's conviced this will be a smooth and easy transition, and the only way to go might be to allow them to do it and let them see what they're really getting into.

3/17/2014

I have mixed emotions about returning to disability. Social pressure and a strong work ethic cast a shadow of shame on me, and I'm reluctant to tell anybody what I'm doing, even my Father. But never in my life have I been lazy: In all the jobs

I've had, I worked hard even to a fault, being taken advantage of and alienating coworkers. I couldn't keep a job for long, six months at most, leaving tired and bitter. Then there was the college. It took me some time to get comfortable, but it was a godsend for me. 15 - 20 hours a week, not a lot of responsibility, frequent breaks, not much stress but for the new quarters: I thrived on those, it was only for two or three weeks at a time, then quickly tapered off. It was actually kind of fun. I applied my knowledge doing something I enjoyed, and got along with the people there. But even then I was never financially independent and eventually that deteriorated as well.

I wasn't diagnosed with schizophrenia until I was 31. In hindsight, there were symptoms well before that, but my drinking at the time makes it a bit fuzzy. Distrust, anti-social behavior, always feeling targeted. Isolating myself. Coming to the realization may have been important in keeping me at the college so long. Medication, therapy, knowing what my limits are and being better able to cope.

3/20/2014

I don't know how to spend my time. I'm killing hours on my computer, and resting on the couch, meditating. There's a lot of paper work to do for SSDI and medical help. I was initially overwhelmed by this, but I recall the last time making repeated trips to the Social Security and DSHS offices and doing a mountain of paper work. It seems to have been streamlined and simplified. Everything is done online and by mail. It's really much easier now.

I made one unnecessary trip to the office, to get a form. I got a call from someone saying I needed to submit a 3441, or something like that. I'm sure I could have goten it online, but the woman said she needed it ASAP and insisted I go to the office for it. The local office is now located in the federal building downtown. I first thought this would be convenient, it's a short walk. The old location required a longer walk or a bus transfer. When I arrived, though, it became hell. Security is intense in federal buildings. There's a scanning station at the entrance. People emptied their pockets, took off their coats and belts, backpacks. Others had no problem with this. They probably do it routinely, or feel a duty to comply. I felt uncomfortable. It became worse as I reached the front of the line and showed my ID and went through the scanner.

At the office upstairs, there were two more guards. They seemed to have an attitude, based on their tone thrpughout the time I was there. One wanted to see my ID a second time. I guess this is routine. Mine has expired. He gave me a badge to wear, and told me I would be escorted out of the building when I was done. I took a number, and sat awkwardly for a half hour, shaken. Two women across the room, who had been in front of me at the checkin and rode the elevator with me, seemed to be watching me the whole time. As they walked past me, I heard one say something I couldn't make out, except for the word "kill." I sat wondering what she might have meant for five or ten more minutes, then my number was called.

As it turned out the form in question HAD already been submitted. My lawyer said she would call and send another copy.

But back to my hours. Without a job, and no structured schedule other than my morning walk, I have a hard time doing anything productive with my days. I daydream a lot, and think about getting involved with people. There's a barista down the street whom I'd very much like to offer a luch or a drink. She's very friendly, pleasant and good-looking. I have a feeling she would take my offer, but I haven't been a very good judge of that lately. Then there are two community forums this weekend. When I found out about the first one, I thought this would be a great experience, even if I just sat and listened for the entire time I was there. It's a new neighborhood development committee. Then I learned of the second one, an informational session on the transit ballot. It's immediately after the neighborhood meeting. I thought I should definitely go to that meeting too, but then suddenly felt overwhelmed, to the point I felt I would be better off going to neither. I'll have to go to one. I don't know which.

3/27/2014

There's an issue with my state disability benefits. Their records indicate I haven't applied for SSI, a requirement. Irma at the DSHS office is telling me to take another trip to the SSA office to execute this, but I have a feeling this isn't necessary. I have a receipt from the online application, and will see if that satisfies their requirement.

Not really much to write about in my life. Spending my days secluded in my apartment, going back and forth from the computer to the sofa. People seem friendly when I go out, there are some I'd really like to meet, but past disappointments and letdowns linger.

4/10/2014

I think about death a lot. At 52, being a life long smoker, living in the center of the city, and just getting by on income and mental health, I'm resigned to the fact that I won't live to be very old. 20 more years? 15? If my health doesn't get me, there's also the Great Earthquake. I even dream about this. I don't have much to be prepared for it, and I'd only be fooling myself to think I could survive in this ancient concrete building. I have a heavy, solid desk for the falling debris, but my hunch is that the building wouldn't stand for very long.

I don't believe in an afterlife. What's done is done. And that's kind of a sad thought for me, as I've done so little in my years. I haven't traveled beyond family trips to Disneyland. I've never had an intimate relationship. I'm running out of time to do these sorts of things. I've never found the opportunities, and maybe haven't looked hard enough. Things like money and my mental state have held me back.

4/13/2014

I enjoy chatting with the baristas. Small talk of course, but some of them lead interesting lives. There's Savanah at the Coffee Tree, an arts student with some of her work on display. Very good. I'd like to take this to the next level, but don't have a clue how to do it. Something that comes naturally to most people, or at least they learned it in high school, has always evaded me. On the rare occasion that I do come out of my shell, women are creeped by me. Thanh, Nina at Starbucks. Not very encouraging.

The independent coffee shops seem much more friendly than chains like Starbucks. I rarely go to the latter any more, both for this and out of principle. I try to support small, local businesses, and they're much more appreciative of your patronage. SB is something like a production line, and while they do notice and treat repeat customers well, the emphasis is to move you along.

I'm visiting cafes other than the Coffee Tree these days, just for a change of scenery, and to meet new people. It makes it a little more interesting in my mundane life. There's the Diva and the Berlin Kafe. Good coffee and very nice people. I don't have their names yet, I should make an introduction.

4/14/2014

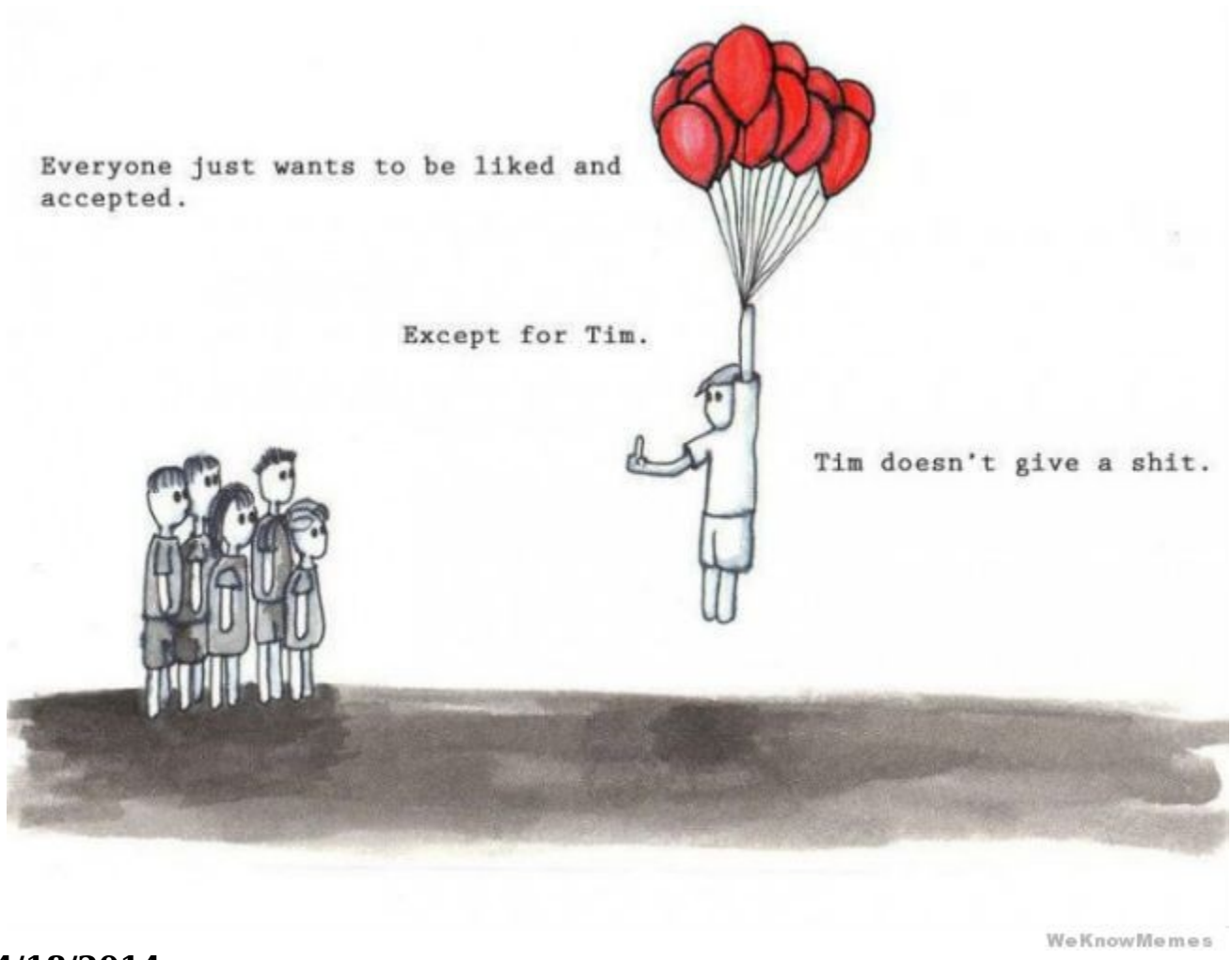
I was looking at the windows across the street this morning. They used to look like eyes to me, watching every move I made. They're twin paned, and standing in the park they used to take the form of statuesque eyes glaring at me. I don't even see a resemblance now. A sign that things are improving.

I had a phone interview with Social Security this morning. It lasted over thirty minutes, and seemed to be primarily questions I've answered previously. I guess its a formality. No hard questions, nothing regarding my disability. This is to determine my eligibility for Supplemental Security Income, which would be very helpful and I hope something comes of it.

Facebook has gotten discouraging. At one time it was a way of pouring out to people in a forum where I felt no limitations, from the comfort of my desk. I could never do anything like this in a real, interpersonal setting. But, people seem to have tired of me. The “likes” and the “shares” are rare now. I'm sure my politics push some people the wrong way, but I have strong feelings, and at one point I was getting a good response. Even my humor goes unnoticed or unappreciated now. My Mother seems to be the only one reading my wall any more. I should move on, but I can't find anything better. There's Disapora, with more of a political slant, but I'm not hitting it off there, either. I don't care for Twitter except as a news feed. The news site I used to post to now requires a paid subscription. It isn't the same, anyway.

4/15/2014

You go, Tim



4/18/2014

I was in the cafe the other day, and watched a stunning woman enter the premises. She was a very professional woman, dressed in business clothes and walking at a brisk pace, apparently in a hurry to get to work. I thought to myself, “wow, wouldn't somebody be lucky to have her as a partner.” I got up to leave after a few minutes, and heard some chatter as I took my cup to the dish tub. As I turned around, she feigned a yawn, as if she knew I had my eye on her and felt compelled to break any hopes of interaction. It's nagging me this morning, but as I think more about it, it's no loss. Her attitude would be very abrasive in any relationship.

4/19/2014

After the Heartbleed bug was exposed on the Internet last week, a person like myself might be led to panic. I'm prepared for this sort of thing, though. The important stuff I have on the cloud, the personal stuff, is encrypted, just for this kind of event, or to protect it from somebody snooping around on the host. Certain hosts are known for this. My bank doesn't use the affected software, and everything else out there is pretty boring. Email might be a concern, but there's

nothing critical there. Changing passwords has been a hassle. Not just one or two but ten to twenty at once. It will take me a while to remember all of them.

4/20/2014

I'm getting a small, but influential audience on my music blog. A couple of DJ's are following me and even taking information from some of my material. Unfortunately, there's no direct acknowledgment, but it's still nice to know.

I have time on my hands, and should use some of that to do more writing than I am. Right now I'm only posting about one article a week, but would like to be more prolific and keep people interested.

4/21/2014

Barb's move was scheduled for this weekend. Cyndy took out a court injunction to block it. I've tried to take a middle ground on this, but nobody will listen to what the other side has to say. Now I'm just sitting back and watching a very tragic plot develop. In Barb's interests, she really needs to get out of the facility she's in. It's a dark and dreary place. But Dad is in no condition to care for her alone. His memory is deteriorating, and he's showing signs of schizophrenia. I guess it's in the genes. It usually develops in the teens and twenties, although I didn't start to show full-blown symptoms until I stopped drinking at 30. He's 80, and that would be extremely rare.

Dad thinks the world of me. He feels my life is nothing short of a miracle, and thinks I should write an autobiography. Parents tend to see their children larger than life. But his love and support, in spite of some of the things I've done to him, have helped keep me from complete disaster. I have to give some of that back now, when he really needs it.

I called Dad this evening. He was on his way out, so it was short. I know he was going to contact his lawyer today, and tried to get a clue as to what they discussed. He told me he and Barb have a “plan,” but wouldn't go into any detail. He did tell me I'm on the “other side” now, and he won't discuss this plan with me for a while. I'm afraid he's cutting off any support he might have, and he desperately needs it now.

4/24/2014

Made another call to Dad last night, and it went badly. He went off on a tirade about Cyndy, giving a completely different story from what I'm hearing from everybody else. He's in denial, and I suggested as much to him. I may have cut off his trust in doing so. I'm not 100% sure who to believe in this. Dad may be in early to middle stages of dementia, and not having anyone to give him live-in care is extremely hard on him. But, when I talk to him he has his own version of things, and I want to believe what he says. I want to back him, but not in the direction he's going.

Lori gives me the other version, and she's been opposed to the idea of Barb moving home from the beginning. Her daughter Jenny has been spending a lot of time with Dad, helping him with his finances. She's finding things like the oven turned on and the door left open. Lori also gets a lot of her information from Cyndy. At times, Dad has me believing that Cyndy really is on a vendetta against him. He thinks Cyndy is trying to take Barb away from him. He felt this way well before the stroke. I don't know why, I haven't always trusted Cyndy. Maybe it was the time, many years ago, when her brother Don lunged me on a family trip, shattering the window in the RV. She defended him, saying it was my fault. I ended up cleaning the mess. I felt bitter toward her at that moment, and I guess this feeling never really went away.

Cyndy is in close contact with the doctor and recovery staff. She passes the info on to Lori, and I get it second or third hand. Before last night, I was taking it just as that. But Friday, Cyndy's husband Jeff sent out an email on a productive dialog he'd had with Dad and Barb. Dad was reluctant, but eventually Barb expressed a desire to move to a rehab facility. In her eyes, the place she's in now is where people go to die. There was an agreement. Then Lori called me yesterday and told me Dad had told her he had no recollection of the meeting. When I brought this up to him later, he told me yes he did remember, and demanded to know who had said otherwise. In an email this morning, he's wondering if it's Jeff who's spreading this.

So I need to call him again, and apologize for any “misunderstanding.” I don't know what I'll say. I'd like to just keep a distance, not really get involved. I owe it to him to back him up through this, but to try to do what's in his best interest.

4/26/2014

Most people look forward to Saturdays as a time to be with friends, hitting their favorite bars or venues, getting a buzz along the way. I look forward to Saturday nights too, but in a much more self-contained way: A local radio station, KPLU, features *All Blues* from 6:00 PM to midnight, with great music and a great DJ. I find myself anticipating it in the afternoon hours. It runs Sundays, too, and I never miss it.

4/30/2014

There was a fire in the building last night. I'm conditioned to ignore the alarm. When I first moved here, the alarm system was broken and would go off once or twice a week. Nobody knew what would trigger it. This was replaced after a couple of years. The current system is much better, but there are still a lot of “false alarms,” such as people burning their food. The walls here are made of concrete, so I don't worry about structural failure, and if there's no smoke on my floor, I ignore it. The firefighters are usually gone in ten minutes or less.

The alarm last night brought four firetrucks and two medic units. At one point, they had to use a ladder to enter the apartment. Turns out, the guy had been trying to set up a crack lab and botched it. He's on the street today, and I'm wondering if there wasn't something I could have done to help him avoid this. He tried to reach out to me, but I took a dislike to him when he first moved in. He was always mooching change and cigarettes. He stopped doing that when I made it clear I wasn't a bank or a dealer. Then later he threatened Theresa. That was enough of him for me. Still, I can sympathize with addiction and loneliness. He didn't seem to have anybody in his life, even family. I can now just hope he survives, and that this will be the “rock-bottom” that brings him to stand up and turn his life around.

I wonder if he didn't hope this would bring him friends. I've done some twisted things in hopes of drawing acceptance and respect.

5/01/2014

I've been confirmed for disability insurance. It's a relief, and I should have some nice sized checks coming in the next couple of weeks. Back pay, plus energy assistance. After paying my lawyer, there are several things I desperately need, such as clothes and new bedding. And maybe paying back some of the money I've borrowed from my parents.

It's still awkward. When people ask me where I work, I just say “between jobs.” It isn't a comfortable feeling, even though I've been here before. The social pressure, real or imagined, can be immense. This morning, a guy I frequently talk to in the cafe asked if I was getting any job leads. I told him I'm on disability these days. Heads seemed to turn. He asked “Back?” I replied “Brain.” I wasn't about to go into any detail, maybe I will some other time.

5/11/2014

I need that check pretty soon. I have money for food, coffee and cigarettes for the next three days, but nothing beyond that. My first SS check is due on the 14th. Dad promised to send me a check to help me out, but it's been two weeks and he's just putting it in the mail today. He thought he'd sent it once, but wasn't sure. Things like this are disconcerting: He believes he can take care of Barb by himself, but he's having too much trouble handling his own affairs to make me believe he's in a state of mind to tend to both of them. He doesn't even remember how to spell my name anymore.

The coffee is becoming an expensive luxury. I go out at least once a day for a walk and to have an americano, listen to some music and people watch. It's sometimes the only way I get out of my apartment. The drink is three dollars, and I'm doing it two or three times a day. It's getting more costly than a pack of cigarettes.

5/13/2014

Public assistance comes at a cost of certain freedoms, particularly privacy. Living in subsidized housing, I have to tolerate inspections, income reviews and more recently, a smoking ban. Cigarettes have been prohibited from the premises for some time now, even from the privacy of one's own apartment. I ignored this for a long time, but the manager finally clamped down and threatened me with a ten day notice. She never actually presented the notice, but I'm more or less complying now. Initially smoking was restricted to a designated area, with benches and tables, although no shelter. Then she decided to close that area too, and told smokers to stand on the sidewalk. Great, pedestrians now get a gasp of second-hand smoke walking by. Not just one breath, there are smokers lined up end to end.

Yesterday, I was standing on the edge of the sidewalk with a cigarette, maybe inches under the overhang. She started to nag me about being too close. It became a shouting match, with her eventually telling me I'm evicted. I'm waiting to see if she follows through on this threat. It's been nearly 24 hours, and I haven't heard anything more. It isn't a quick process.

There are similar sacrifices in the workplace. I'm not sure which is worse. In applying for a job, employers will run background checks, drug tests, Google and Facebook queries; they may well deny you employment if you're a smoker. I don't use enough of the freedom I have, but I appreciate it more as it's taken away.

5/19/2014

Feeling pretty good. The money's coming, and I won't be worried about that for a while. Back pay will bring over $6000 after attorney's fees, and there are several things I've been holding off on that I can now pursue: A new computer, printer. Clothing. 6000 isn't a lot, but I don't think I've had that much at one time. I've never been able to save very much, maybe a couple hundred at a time, and that goes fast. Unfortunately SS puts a cap on this, so it won't be a long-term cushion. $741 a month is what I'll have coming in. That might have been an average month at the college, but it's steady: No Summer breaks or “professional development days.”

I haven't been seeing much of Theresa these days. Her health is poor, and she often doesn't feel good enough to visit. So, my social life is down to chatting with the baristas or my case manager at the mental health center. Then there's Facebook and social media. Not much of a life, but it's more than I've had at times in the past.

5/21/2014

The manager followed through on her threat. Just got a ten day notice to comply or vacate. The notice is only partly true, I never told her to “fuck off.” Ironically I was smoking a cigarette in my apartment when she delivered the notice, and I'm sure she smelled it. I didn't answer the door. They're waxing the floor, and I'm

confined here for a few hours. I'm sure she'll complain about it (the smoke). It might be time to leave here, but I don't have any place else to go. Rent in this city is skyrocketing, and on my income it might not be an option.

5/23/2014

Now I'm being hit with an inspection of my apartment. The manager knows I struggle with that, and I don't doubt I will be receiving another ten-day notice. She'll do anything she can.

I spoke to a guy named Owen, a housing specialist at the mental health center, explaining my situation. We agreed, I won't find anything quite like I have now, with the location, view, space and price. There is another housing agency, independent of the one I'm dealing with now, on Capitol Hill, but they have a long waiting list, and it could be years. I applied, and he also called Laura, the building manager, to see what he could find out, and if he could mitigate the situation. He tells me it would take at least three or four notices before an eviction is actually carried out. Some relief, at least there's time.

Eviction can be devastating for some. No place to go, housing management often throws possessions on the street for the vultures to swoop on. I have family, and could find at least a temporary living situation. My sister's husband has a truck. I have money to rent a moving van, and plenty of help. I'm lucky I've never been forced to lived on the streets before; I've been very close.

Getting a lot of unfriendly looks from people. Could be the rain today, but I think Laura has others on her side who would like to see me out of here.

I haven't showered or shaved in a week. I get that way sometimes, begin to feel helpless and fighting the world and little things like hygiene don't matter to me.

5/25/2014

The apartment next door is vacant. The resident was evicted a couple of weeks ago, failed a background check. I noticed the maintenance crew left the window open this weekend. No doubt Laura is trying to catch cigarette smoke drifting out of my apartment. I can't stop thinking there's a camera there as well. Laura loves surveillance. When she came here, there were cameras at the entrances. Now they're all over. I closed the window and the curtains. It's hot and dark in here today.

The people from the respite are starting to make me nervous when I go downstairs. There are half a dozen to a dozen of them at a time, and they look like a pretty tough group. One of them made a veiled threat to me as I walked by, asking why I looked at him. They've been out there all afternoon and evening, and I'll either have to go out the back way or stay in for the night. This compliance is getting insufferable. It's raining, people keep asking me for smokes, and I'm not exactly getting a friendly reception.

I've tried smoking the e-cigarettes again, but those just lack something. It isn't the nicotine. The vapor hits your throat and lungs much differently than the smoke does. I can do one or two e-cigs, but then I crave the smoke again.

I had a chance to go to the ocean with my sister this weekend. I don't know why I backed out, it would have been good to get away from here for a few days. Something held me back.

Spoke to Teresa tonight. First time I've seen her since things started to deteriorate. She seems positive that Laura has little power to evict me. It would take three notices in 90 days, not one year. She has it down pretty well, I'm taking her word for it. If Laura's determined, she might get her way, but it won't be easy. I've outlasted many building managers before her.

5/30/2014

It's been a hell of a week. It's a little hard to write at this time. Things are building up, and the stress seems to be triggering seizures. I'm also being monitored by the building management, looking for a reason to hit me up me with another ten-day notice. Laura denies this, but it's clear there's more going on than routine apartment management.

I saw LaSaundrea as I got off the elevator a while ago. She is the financial worker here. She gave me an angry look. I can only guess she noticed the TV I left in the hall by my door overnight. Somebody was going to pick it up, but she never showed. I'm waiting for a flat cart now, but I'm sure I'm going to be written up for this. That's two out of three.

When I go out to smoke, I choose a spot where I can be alone, well away from the building and common area. This doesn't go down well with others. They watch me, and make comments. Probably feeling that I'm being anti-social. I don't go out there to talk to people, I just want to smoke a cigarette and the lease stipulates that it be outside.

People want me out of here, and I'm almost ready to comply. I don't have any options in the short term, but in an emergency, I could move in with my mother in Auburn. Hate to think about that. I can't stand the suburbs, and Auburn is so distant and so conservative it wouldn't be tenable for long.

6/06/2014

The inspection wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I saw a couple of things Laura might have written up, but didn't. I'm not in the clear yet. I may still be written up or even evicted for smoking in my apartment. I'm trying to keep this outside, but habit and the feeling of being unwelcome by others are getting on my nerves. Then there are the moochers. Some become very angry when I say no. I think I'll start referring them to the gas station. They can get individual

cigarettes for a buck there. They'll still be angry, but I'm not they're dealer or provider.

Looking for activities to pass my time. First, I'll spend more time on my blog. Then volunteer some hours in the computer lab at the mental health center. Finally, get more involved with the openSUSE community. I haven't contributed a lot there beyond the forums, and I'm not even doing that now. I might pick up some tickets on the bug tracker, or write an article or two on the wiki.

6/13/2014

It's been a hell of a week. The stares and chatter outside are getting on my nerves. I can't stop thinking the building management might be spying on me. It's wearing me, I'm too nervous to go out, and depression is setting in. I'm spending hours laying on the couch each day, trying to meditate and focus on positive or stimulating ideas. Sometimes it's working.

Today has actually been a good day. I've made arrangements to volunteer at the computer lab at the mental health center. I badly need some structure, and this will be stimulating as well. I also received a new PC. I paid more than I usually would, but I think it will be worth it. I have four desktop stations now. Not sure how I'll use all of them.

6/15/2014

Management is on site seven days a week now. There's a maintenance guy using the apartment next door for storage. I think he knows I'm having a cigarette when I get up in the morning, don't know if he'll report this. I'm having feelings like I was a couple of years ago, being under constant surveillance. People trying to manipulate my behavior. The seizures are coming almost daily now. I'm not blacking out, but it's enough to shut out everything else and cause a temporary panic. They're lasting about 60 seconds. I tell myself, “keep calm, take a breath,” and that sometimes helps. I'm drained afterward.

It's Father's Day. I'm treating Dad to dinner at my favorite restaurant, the Wild Ginger. We've had many happy occasions there. He wants to bring Barb, though, and I'm not sure this is a good idea. I have no idea how he plans to do it. She can't walk, for one thing, and he has a court order barring him from taking her off of the health care center premises, at least as I understand it. I'll be glad to see her, but hope I'm not abetting a crime.

6/29/2014

I begin work in the computer lab on Tuesday. I will be spending two days a week there, six hours. That's not much, but I don't want to move in too quickly. I'll add days as I adjust. I feel good about this. I need something to occupy myself, beyond the hours I spend on my computer at home. They'll appreciate my experience.

The orientation didn't go particularly well. It was an introduction for new volunteers at the medical center, and I was just lost. I didn't bring a pen, and forgot some papers. There was a cup of pens near the entrance of the hall, but I didn't notice it until the orientation was finally over! Near the end, the speaker gave me a stare. I must have been squirming, and she noticed that I borrowed a pen from someone else. She asked later if I was from the recycle program at mental health center, and I just said no. It was a little embarrassing.

Dinner with Dad went great. The food was excellent, and we had a good conversation. Barb doesn't talk as much as she used to, but she was cheerful and happy to see me. Dad wanted to pay the tab, but it was Father's Day, and I couldn't let him do that. I hope we have a chance to do this again soon.

7/05/2014

The first day at the computer lab was quiet and uneventful. I was discussing leaving an hour early with a staff person, but decided to wait a few minutes, and four or five people came at once. I was only asked a couple of questions, one on time restrictions (none), and the other a guy had inadvertently closed a tab in his browser and needed it back. Easy to do.

Topher, the supervisor, can't seem to put enough emphasis on confrontations and flare-ups, pointing out the alarm button to me several times. I have a feeling it's much rarer than he's making it seem, but I'm pondering a strategy nonetheless. I handled the mentally ill at the college on occasion, and respect and goodwill usually tamed a difficult situation, as with anyone else.

7/11/2014

I'm beginning to get used to the smoking ban. Friendly gestures from people make it much tolerable, and beginning to spend more time out than I had been. The women have been especially amiable, some hinting they would like to get to know me on a different level. My favorite was a Muslim woman lifting her jilbab, revealing a closer view of her breasts. Nicely proportionate. I'm hesitant, though.

The lab at the MHC is boring so far, no questions. People generally know their way around. All they do is browse the Internet, watch YouTube and fill out forms. Not a lot that go wrong. I'm the only one that's actually needed help! I confused the workstation with a different computer and requested Topher's assistance.

7/16/2014

I'm finally doing what I'm good at, even if it's just introducing somebody to Word. He needs a lot of attention, but I try to get him going and leave him to his self. I try to complement him a lot, on things like handwriting and typing, and his confidence is building up. At first he wanted me to stand over his shoulder as he

typed, but I made it clear to him that I would not do that. I think he could do this on his own now.

I'm doing for free what I was paid to do for years, and enjoying it more than ever. Other people are aware of this, and seem to appreciate it. One woman came to the door just to look at me and smile. Money just doesn't matter to me. That's easier to say now when I have a few thousand in the bank to hold for a while. But this is the best situation for me. That could change in a few months or a year, but I'll enjoy it for now.

7/23/2014

I was downstairs smoking in the rain this morning, getting some shelter from a tree. A woman from the respite center, beautiful young lady, walked by close to me on her way to work. She gave me a lovely smile, and a soft laugh. We had crossed paths last night as she left, me with a cigarette in my mouth. She wasn't laughing at me, just the irony. And there seemed to be something else, but if I don't talk to her, I won't know for sure. I said “good morning,” and she continued on her way.

I'm starting to thrive on the attention. Unlike before, it's all friendly and maybe even some respect for what I'm doing. I keep trying to find an explanation for this, but maybe I should just enjoy it.

I missed two events in a row that I should have and wanted to attend, but in both cases the time passed by. The first was a rally for Jess Spear. I only noticed a reminder on Facebook half an hour before the event. I just couldn't psych myself to feel prepared for the crowd. The second was a gig with Janiva Magness. I only when the show started. I ran to the bus stop but when I arrived the doors were locked and the curtains drawn. I'm usually good about marking my calendar, but for some reason not this time.

So I was wrong. I was out smoking again, and the woman from the respite was leaving this time. I was kind of afraid of this. This time she wouldn't look at me. Funny how I always get women wrong.

7/30/2014

Added an 8AM shift at the MHC today. The room filled up immediately, I guess it's the busiest time. I haven't done mornings in a long time. I don't like getting up early anymore, and hate being rushed, but it's just once a week. I need it, I have too much idle time right now, and feel much better paying something back.

The money is going quickly right now. I've been buying gadgets I've needed for some time, such as a printer and a phone upgrade, but I need to watch it or it will be gone before I know it.

8/08/2014

There was a suicide down the hall this week. Given the stench, he must have been dead several days. Dave found the body. Dave's mentally challenged guy whom I like very much, and I frequently chat with him. Sometimes, though, I just want to turn him off, and pay no attention to him. This was one of those days. I had my headphones on while he tried to tell me what was going on. I smelled the odor, but wasn't interested in what Dave had to say. He followed me to the office, where I was going to report the stench, and only then did I listen to him. I felt a little bad for having ignored him. I'll try to be a little more friendly in the future.

I've thought about suicide before, even made an attempt when I was 14. In recent years, not so much anymore, my thoughts have been how I would do it, and if it would be reversible. If I could catch myself, for example, jumping from a building. Or a drug overdose treated. Any method I were to choose would have to have an exit.

8/14/2014

We had a family meeting last night about Dad and his state of mind. We were joined by their case worker, who is getting very frustrated and hoped to get some advice in dealing with him, if not for one of us to step forward to confront him. Things aren't good right now. There is no doubt he's suffering from dementia, but wants to be the sole caretaker of Barb. He's not letting the caretakers do their job, and at least three have quit so far. One was injured from doing too much lifting. Dad was demanding that she move Barb 25 – 30 times a day! He would rather they weren't there, but by court order this is not an option for him, and Barb would deteriorate quickly without 24 hour professional assistance.

He gets little sleep, he's undernourished, and his behavior becomes more erratic each day. Jeff's been added to his enemies list, apparently for making suggestions on Barb's care. I need to talk to him, but we only chat by phone, and he only tells me the good things that are happening, at least in his view. I've confronted him before, but the result was a series of angry emails and phone calls, and I was temporarily removed from his list of loyal friends. He wants to have a party in the coming weeks, says I'll be invited, but won't bring people who question his actions. It will be a small party.

8/27/2014

Not much going on right now. Spending most my time alone, as usual. The computer lab gets me out and mingling, but that's only a few hours a week. Better than nothing. I'd be depressed if I didn't have that. Listening to the blues on the radio right now. After much searching, I've found blues broadcasting 24x7, which is nice. There just aren't stations dedicated to the blues, so it's taken me some time to find these. A few are local, most are scattered across the country. They’re all non-profit stations, and I've made some modest donations to help them keep this up. I'd hate to lose them.

I have some projects at home to keep me somewhat occupied. All computer-related. While it isn't really “socializing,” the internet gives me a vent and keeps me in touch with the virtual world. My fears don't hold me back, and it's much healthier than total isolation.

There's nothing really challenging at the lab, but maybe that's just as well. I'm relaxed and enjoying my time there. People are appreciative and I have no problem killing time surfing the web and posting on Facebook.

9/01/2014

My computer's been compromised again. Someone took control of my mouse and keyboard, and I don't know what else might have been done. I don't know how long this has been going on, and wonder if I've been injected with a keylogger. I'll have to go offline for a few days, and start over from scratch. Files are backed up, so this shouldn't be too big of an issue. I might use my new mini desktop to access the web. It's a 5.5” by 4” computer that's not much bigger than a cellphone, but pretty much runs like a PC. In spite of my knowledge of computers, security has always been a weakness.

I have a suspicion of the guy downstairs being behind this. I don't know the extent of his knowledge, but the information is out there, and he manages the computer lab here. Last week, I was watching some porn while waiting for my laundry. I looked at the clock and It was past the finish cycle and I rushed downstairs. As I left my room, he was walking by and had a laugh. I've been seeing a smug smile from him ever since.

9/03/2014

I'm trying to stay away from the internet, but I just can't. I don't have a TV or any other distractions, so it's my only source of entertainment. Music, forums, social media, things that can't be replaced by a book. I'm using my new gadget, and some caution, but the best thing to do would be to go offline indefinitely. At least there's no personal data on that.

Strange, the person or persons just seem to be having fun, not out for money or ID information, from what I can tell. They want me to know they're there. It's just for their amusement, at least so far. I'm not laughing.

I'm going to put my computer back online tonight. I just miss the music too much, and the attacks seemed to have receded.

9/04/2014

It's still not over. I'm going to have to rebuild my PC, and that can be a pain. I just don't get what this person or persons get out of this. If it's for amusement, they must live pretty boring lives.

9/06/2014

Well I've cleaned up my computer, but not knowing how they penetrated, it might be futile. I'm going on as I usually do, but with extra caution. The network meter has been pretty busy. It's making me nervous, but I'm not ready to shut down yet. What the hell are these people getting out of this?

9/08/2014

I'm offline again. Don't know who's behind it, but I'm sure it's in the neighborhood, as it was before. This and other personal information are making the rounds. Everyone I pass on the street looks suspicious, like they're in on this game. People are staring or deliberately looking away.

I've installed extra security software, but haven't educated myself on how to use it yet. There are no rootkits detected, but they could easily have my passwords and changing them at this time would be pointless. I did change it for my encrypted files, including this one, and might return to going offline to access them. I used to do this as a precaution, now it's necessary. Maybe too late.

9/09/2014

I've done everything I know how to do. I'll have to go offline for at least a week this time, but must find out how this has happened. Being offline will be extremely difficult for someone like me. With my blog and Facebook, it's my main line of communication with the world. Most people would spend time mingling with others in a bar or club. I'd just sit back in a corner, watching others but keeping a distance. Staring at my phone. With the internet, I finally found a forum to overcome my limitations. Now it's been taken away.

I have enough music in my library to play for two weeks. This will help me get through this period. I'll miss the DJ's and the new music, songs I haven't heard before. I'm scheduled to talk to my case manager today, maybe she'll have suggestions. She usually brings up things like walking to the park or going to events at the mental health center. She's even mentioned a sewing club. Not very appealing to me.

I'm scheduled for the lab today. I don't have a lot of confidence in the security there, but have to change my passwords and can't do that here. It will be a good idea to do more research too.

9/10/2014

I'm getting the silent phone calls again, and this morning, someone has been knocking on my door and running away. Pretty childish, but it's really getting unnerving. I don't have a clue why I'm targeted, or what they want to accomplish other than my misery. It's personal. I trust almost no one now, and those I do trust I can't see without planning in advance. I'm pretty isolated now.

I woke up dizzy this morning, and after a coffee and a cigarette nearly vomited on the floor. I called in sick and slept through til 11, with the interruptions of the door-knocks. I'm still tired and dizzy, but I can eat and was able to see Alyssa to talk about my situation. She was understanding and made suggestions, such as spending more time at the computer lab and going out for coffee. Good ideas, but it won't be the same.

9/11/2014

The dizziness was back this morning, worse than before. I called the clinic and walked in to see a doctor. Beautiful young intern, I wish I'd shaved and brushed my teeth before going in. Farthest things from my mind right now. I told them about the stress I've been under, but they weren't really sure what the cause is. I was given IV fluid and lab tests, and told to drink a lot of water and call tomorrow if it persists.

I walked to the computer lab, nervous about my bank account, but the door was closed. Apparently nobody came to open it today. I'll have to make a call or go to the service center. I'm bitter at nearly everybody right now. I feel as though even those who didn't directly take part were at least partly aware of it but haven't come forward with an explanation.

9/12/2014

The dizziness is gone this morning. The suspicions are also waning, but not to a level of trust. The anger and fear won't go away soon. I'm getting some time online with my phone, but it's limited in functionality and drains the battery quickly. Thinking about going back online later today. There's a Friday night radio program I hate to miss. I don't have a lot of confidence, though. I'll need some help securing my modem-router, but it will be hard to find anybody with enough advanced knowledge at my provider. They sold it to me for $100, they better know what they're doing.

The information that's out there is scary. Name, address, SSN, account#. This log. This could be just the beginning of my problems.

9/14/2014

This bastard owns me. I stayed offline for four days, did a clean install. Tightened my firewall. There were a few things that looked suspicious, but writing to a security mailing list, I was told these things are normal. Maybe I was paranoid, I thought. I couldn't get it off my mind. Finally, he started playing around, opening windows and such. I'm back offline. Shit. I don't know what to do. I'm paying $42 bucks a month for broadband, and the internet is part of my livelihood.

How's he doing it? I need help, but I don't know where I'll find it. There were some pretty bright people at the college, but I've mostly cut off contacts there. A

suggestion on the mailing list was to shut down all computers but one, and run a packet sniffer from there. I could possibly do this from my mini desktop, but there will be a high learning curve.

10/27/2014

Slowly moving back to my production box. The feeling that I'm constantly being tracked is hard to break, but my doctor has prescribed me haloperidol in addition to my usual psych meds to take as needed, and it's easing the stress. The feeling has been constant, like someone's watching my internet activity, tracking me on my phone, even listening to my conversations.

There was one suspicious ip address in the sniffer, but I'm not ready to report it yet. It traced to a provider in CO, I think, and I'll have to watch it more closely. Beyond that, the constant probing by Google is creepy.

11/10/2014

Still not back up. Not 100% confident, and I've had a bad experience doing a BIOS flash before. A guy at the college saved me. I know how to do it, just reluctant.

I'm spending a lot of time on the couch recently. The other day I just felt exhausted, but hadn't done anything physically straining and hadn't lost any sleep. I think it's the depression and helplessness I feel. I talked to my doctor about losing some weight, and her suggestion was to walk more, not just going out for a coffee but spending 30 to 60 minutes rigorously exercising. This might be a solution for the depression as well, but I have a hard time motivating myself for this kind of thing. I need a destination and a “reward,” such as a beverage. Trying to build up my psyche.

11/28/2014

Thanksgiving was a little heavy. Barb and Dad have moved to a care center, and the change is hitting her pretty hard. She's barely coherent, and rarely smiled in the time she was there. Something that's been bothering me lately, she's frequently bringing up the passing of her sister and Mother. It happened in a short time, and she seems a little bitter that her Mother left so soon after. She seems to want to be with her Mother more than anything else, and might be ready to join her. The thought crossed my mind that it might help her to visit her mother's grave and release some of these emotions; I mentioned this to Lori, and she didn't feel the same way. It would be very tense, probably more than she can handle.

The haloperidol has helped me, but the feelings just won't subside. The hacker was back the other day, manipulating mouse movements. I get feelings he's monitoring me away from my computer. That isn't possible, but I can't break the thought.

11/29/2014

Things were going rather passively today, passing time on my computer, surfing the web and following Facebook. Then suddenly I completely lost control of the computer: The scroll bar jumped to the bottom of the page, and wouldn't do anything else; I couldn't open the control/status button; the command terminal was haywire, entering lines of spaces. The bastard had me again. Then I attempted to switch to text mode on the keyboard; as I did, my phone slid off the space bar! It had been resting there. I smiled in relief. This happened to me once before, and I didn't notice if the phone was there. I erased it, went offline, and did a clean install. I wonder how much of this is in my head, just normal actions from things I'm doing unconsciously. It's very hard to relax.

12/03/2014

Well, Lori called tonight to tell me Barb is heading for a hospice. I didn't ask if they determined her to be terminally ill, but I doubt that. I think she has a few years left, but she is struggling. This will be hard for both her and Dad to accept. I don't know where Dad will go. He can't live alone. Lori brought up the idea of him moving in with Jeff. They'd have to get a larger apartment, but he lives in Kent, and is on better terms with Dad than anybody. I get along with him, but he can get on my nerves quickly, being together 24/7 would be a disaster. Lori has a house, but she's been pretty candid with him and has upset him a few times. She lives in Puyallup anyway, and Dad is deeply rooted in Kent. That's where his friends are, all of his ties. He should be as close to Barb as possible, anyway.

12/07/2014

I feel like a hypocrite these days. I haven't participated in political activity in quite a while, just talking the talk on social media. I haven't had good experience at these events in the past. I'll turn out and first look for a friend or comrade to help carry me through the ordeal. I don't have much luck with that. We'll talk for a few minutes, and they'll move on. I end up isolating, going in the corner for a cigarette and trying not to be conspicuous. I have a way of bringing attention to myself, though, not through any deliberate effort.

Now as thousands are marching in the streets, I'm calling out a guy in the comments on a blog. He's whining about the inconvenience and futility of protesting. He claims it makes Seattle look “pathetic,” like a bunch of “gutter punks and hippies.” One of the first things I say in response is, “How would Seattle look if people stayed home and watched other cities protest on TV?” And I'm doing basically that, staying home and tracking the action online. I'm feeling a lot of conflict about this.

I often wonder what kind of audience I have online. My music blog draws a few thousand visitors a month. I don't know how many people read my posts on Facebook, but I suspect it's more than a few friends and family. I actually have

found some fame over the years: “Legalize, tax and regulate” (marijuana) originally came from me. I was talking to a young woman at Seattle Central College about the subject, and when she said it should be legalized, those words came out. She was stunned. “NO!” We left it there. Some 20 years later it's the slogan for the legalization movement.

I seem have the respect of NFL owners, too. My brother called me last year about a large percentage of football players ending up broke within a few years of leaving the game. I said maybe the should provide a free, mandatory financial class for rookies. Reading Michael Sam's story this year, the St. Louis Rams were doing just that. I don't know if other teams are, but I suspect they aren't alone. I also originated the “silent count” that's now standard in football.

I don't have anything to show for this bit of fame. Maybe someday there will be a reward for it, besides a little bit of pride.

12/12/2014

People have been commenting on how I'm always off in my own world. Not in a bad way, just something they can't help notice. Going out with my music on, gazing at my phone or people watching as I drink my coffee, or having my own spot when I go out to smoke; I live in the city center, but always try to find solitude. I don't think there's anything wrong with that, but I need to break out of my shell more often.

12/15/2014

Joe posted a link to an article on the science of “mondegreen,” or mishearing words or lyrics. It immediately got me thinking of my experiences on the buses or streets, hearing random bits of conversations and stringing them together, personalizing them in the process. These “conversations” become very hostile at times. Or once, waiting for a bus in Auburn, people driving by were saying something to me. It was an angry tone. For ten or fifteen minutes, one after another were telling me the same thing. I was too shaken to look back at them. I finally moved across the parking lot, away from the street. After a minute or two, I finally realized I was hearing the tires on the pavement. Those were very hard times.

12/21/2014

It's been a bad day. It started out looking like my KVM switch had been hijacked, or that was what I gathered. As I was contemplating what I was going to do, I spilled a cappuccino on my desk and keyboard. Nothing important was lost on the desk, and the keyboard seems fine.

The mouse actions were erratic, like somebody was playing games with me. Two things I thought to do were to test the mouse on board the computer, and see if

maybe, just *maybe*, the battery was the issue. The mouse performed much better on board, but I still wanted to check the battery.

Looking in my desk drawer, there were no batteries. I'm 99% sure there were two of them left when I last grabbed one. It's like somebody's been here and taken them, but why would they take batteries of everything I have here? I once lost cigarettes lighters the same way. I had a bag of lighters I'd accumulated at the smoke shop. One day they were gone, and I'm positive I hadn't used them all.

I made a trip to the grocery store on Broadway. I needed several things, but was sure they would have batteries as well. I first stopped at Starbucks to get some gift cards for Christmas. By the time I got to the checkout stand at the store, my debit card was missing. I ran back to Starbucks, but they hadn't seen it. It didn't turn up at QFC. I'm screwed. I can write checks, but I don't know what's going to happen. I can't call my bank until tomorrow. I might be screwed.

I made a trip later to the drug store, and got some batteries. I guess a KVM needs more power, it has to relay the information to the computer. That's what I'm guessing. The one I have seems very hungry for power, but for now this problem seems to be fixed.

I've been feeling people watching me, wondering if all of them are somehow behind this. A guy looked at me while I was scattering to find my card and said “look at that guy.” He wasn't commenting on my charm. I took some haloperidol and with the situation on my computer taken care of, this evening should be much calmer.

12/31/2014

I can't get over the feeling that someone is prowling in my apartment, taking small things and gaining physical access to my computer. The bolt on the door uses the same key as the handle lock, not a very secure setup. If someone can open one lock, they have access to both. I need to get a more secure bolt and I'm waiting to hear back from a locksmith on the price.

01/03/2015

It's been a strange day. I woke from a dream early thin morning, moaning something out loud. Don't remember the dream or what I said. I was wide awake, though, with lots of energy. It was only 2:30 AM. I went to the computer for a while, posting on Facebook and reading articles, listening to music as I went along. Before I knew it four hours had passed. I laid down on the couch and went back to sleep for a few hours.

I woke at ten, and couldn't find my keys. I immediately feared someone had stolen them, breaking into my apartment while I slept. I used a spare key to go out for a coffee. The thought of someone stealing the key continued to trouble me. I finally found it on the floor when I returned home.

I'm getting looks and comments from people, mostly those hanging out on the corner, chiding me for standing alone or not passing out cigarettes. Then today, I rode the elevator with two black men and a neighbor woman. She and I do not get along, but I'm not sure why. She won't return a smile or a hello. One of the men was ranting about something, I didn't hear what. The other one asked me if I knew who the first one was. I didn't recognize him. As he said this, I started to pay attention, and the first one was making gestures at me, threatening to tear my eyes out or something. They all left at the same time, but I'm a little worried. Don't know if it's just talk, or if he really intends to assault me. The smoking policy is giving me serious problems. There's a guy in the building who claims I come out to watch him all day. He needs to take his pills, but things like these are building up. I can't take much more of it.

1/04/2015

Whatever was going on seems to be over this morning. I talked to a social worker and my nurse yesterday. The social worker insisted there was nothing going on in the building that he knew of. My nurse pointed out that I've talked about “looks” before, even fairly recently. This morning people seem friendly, and I haven't seen the guy who made the threat since Sunday night, three days ago. Really, I wondered if there were rumors going around that I was a pedophile. The woman has two kids, and I've spoken to them before, and I couldn't help wondering if that somehow figured into this. I'm calm now, but still looking over my shoulder.

1/19/2015

There's not much privacy in my life. I live in the city center, so I can't expect much, but I should have some solitude in my apartment. Having people snooping on my computer, going outside for “breaks” when I want a cigarette, worrying that someone will be knocking on my door if I smoke inside. Always drawing attention to myself when I go out. I never intend to do this, but somehow I have a “magnetic” personality that always turns peoples' heads, good or bad.

2/14/2015

The women have been very friendly lately, especially the East African women. They seem to be inviting me to open up come out of my shell, showing me compassion and fondness. Many see Muslims in a negative light, associated with intolerance and violence. Those I've known are very friendly and intelligent, and human. I'm going to invite the next one I chat with to join me for a coffee.

2/21/2014

I've been pretty occupied this last two weeks, and in very good spirits. One rubs off on the other, and it shows to others. The friendly gestures also help me along. I'm not as busy as I'd like to be, but I'm at a level to keep the paranoia and depression from setting in.

My blog is getting over a thousand visitors a month. Nice milestone. Some of these are coming from Russia and China, and I'm sure they have other things in mind than the local blues scene. It's still inspiring me more to keep it current.

2/23/2014

Haven't seen Laura, the building manager, for at least ten days. On vacation, I guess. I dread her authority, and it's kind of relaxing to have her gone. I'm always expecting her to come to my door at any time to serve me a notice.

I fell asleep with the radio on last night, as I usually do. I was woken by a phone call from Lori. I couldn't make out what she was saying over the radio, and told her to wait a sec as I turned it down. I thought I heard her say "shot in the leg," but didn't think I was hearing her right. I frantically started pushing buttons on my radio alarm, but nothing would turn it off. I told her I would call her back. She repeated, "shot in leg." I hung up, stunned. Then I finally realized it was the other radio that was turned on. I switched it off, then began walking nervously around the floor, not sure what to do.

I woke, and listened to the news for a while, thinking about calling Lori to see if everything was okay. There was something about a shooting, and someone had been shot in the leg.

I got a text message this morning from someone I couldn't identify. It was about a meeting. The message was orphaned, but there were messages from Jeff and Joe saying simply, “Okay.” I asked what this meeting was about, and Lori explained that the manager at the care facility wanted to talk about Dad and Barb. Lori doesn't answer my phone calls these days, so I seem to be out of the loop on this. I know that Dad is talking about reinstating his drivers license; it was revoked after a series of incidents, including a hit-and-run. He's also talking about taking Barb to Arizona. On the former, I'm skeptical. He just has too much trouble paying attention to details. There is an AARP driving class available to seniors. Mom does it every year to reduce her insurance. Maybe this would be a good first step for Dad.

A trip to AZ might be good for them. They love baseball, and spring training is in play. They haven't seen Steevie since she moved there, either. Then, taking care of Barb outside a controlled setting might be a heavy burden for the caretaker. I have mixed emotions. I'll wait and see what the others say.

3/02/2015

I'm getting angry at people right now. They're trying to pique me with comments about my behavior. They're even making comments about my going out to smoke. Or that I don't have enough friends. One of them is a b* that doesn't even look at or talk to people when she arrives and leaves. And she thinks I have a problem?

4/06/2015

I've been thinking about two family dogs from 30 – 40 years ago. Very sad thoughts, especially about Sooner. He was mixed, not a pretty pup, and was adopted while I was away. I never fully embraced him myself. I don't think anyone did. He was very lonely, and unloved. What a tortured life he had. He was constantly scratching his butt on the picnic table, until it was bare. I didn't understand why. I thought it must have been some skin disease. Now I realize, dogs like to be scratched. They need it sometimes. Nobody did that to Sooner. I don't know why I'm thinking about this now, but it's a terrible feeling. I wish I could have done it differently.

4/16/2015

I was on an upswing for a week or so. The kind of high I feel when I drop my meds for a while. Then, when reading an email, a great weight came over me. For two or three days after that, I was depressed, lonely, and feeling like people were coming after me for whatever reason. Same as a med change. I'm back now, but I should try to keep this balanced. I don't need swings like this.

4/18/2015

I'm having memory lapses. I'm forgetting passwords, and couldn't even recall my phone number when I left a message on my sister's voicemail recently. In that case, it hadn't been long since I'd dropped my land phone, and I was still getting used to giving out my cell number, but I just went blank. In the past two weeks, I've forgotten both the root and user passwords on my PC, among others. That's never happened to me before. I called the pharmacy to see if one or more of my prescriptions could have side effects on short term memory, and they *could*, but as there've been no changes recently, it isn't likely to be the cause. I have an appointment with my neurologist, and should call my psychiatrist as well. It's been a few months and seems to be getting more serious.

4/23/2015

I'm feeling eyes turned on me when I go out. There are crowds on both ends of the block where I stand to smoke, and they all seem to be looking my way. I hear bits and pieces of the conversations, and can only guess what they're saying, but sense it's me they're talking about. It isn't flattering.

Went to the Jazz Alley the other night to see Janiva Magness. She's a great singer, but I can also identify with some of the things she's been through in life. I usually play the music when I go out, but it was only a 15 minute trip by bus, I would be hearing Janiva for a couple of hours, so I left it in my pocket. This might have been a bad choice. I walked the last five or six blocks, smoking a cigarette, and the chatter became focused on me. Passing one group after another, I was filling in the blanks, making it personal. No problems once I got to the venue,

and I turned the music back on for the ride home. Amazing what a difference it makes for me.

4/28/2015

Now my neighbor is watching me. I don't see him, but he pounds on the wall when I light a cigarette, or yells at me late at night. I can't hear what he says, the walls are concrete. Maybe he got tired of hearing my yell and moan when having these seizures. It doesn't really matter. I'll have to live through this for now. It's hard, every sound I hear at night seems to come from him. I heard taps on the door the other night. One tap at a time. I'm sure it was him, but I can't guess what he was doing.

I'm calmer this morning than I have been in several days. I'm laughing. A nervous laugh, but it's better than I've felt recently. The seizures are over. I'm even sleeping. I had been waking at 4 AM, but I'm taking my psych meds later and that makes a difference. Years ago, when I first began taking olanzapine, I was having trouble getting up in the morning. Just real drowsy. I began taking it earlier, about 6:00 or after dinner, and that helped. That wasn't intended to be permanent, but it became habit. I'm bumping it forward a couple of hours now.

5/04/2015

I don't know what my neighbor sees or hears. The curtain and window are closed, and I'm playing the music low. It doesn't seem he would be able to see anything but my shadow at night, but I don't feel sure about that. The cigarette smoke could be going to his window. It's been a week since he pounded on the wall, and the management hasn't pounded on my door, so it doesn't appear he's going to report me.

5/7/2015

The weather has a deep impact on peoples' moods. Sunny day like today, everyone is all smiles and “hello.” Clouds and rain and they don't want to see you, irritated and unsocial. This is an easy association to make, but I always take it personally, either way. I wonder what I've done to make myself seem so popular or despised, when it's just what's in the air that triggers their mood swings.

5/08/2015

Feeling excited about my blog. Still not a lot of traffic, maybe a thousand visits a month, many from Russia and China. They aren't there to read about blues in the northwest. But there are some influential readers, in particular John Kessler, a local blues DJ with a wide following. I recently discovered a young local singer named Stacy Jones, and wrote about her. That weekend, Kessler began playing Jones on his weekend program, *All Blues*. He played her for three weeks, giving Jones and her new album a strong recommendation. People on the All Blues

group on Facebook began turning out to see her live. She's been getting posted all over FB since, and yesterday, for the first time, I heard her on an east coast program. She's also played at a blues festival in Mississippi this week, the birthplace of the blues. She's only been outside of the NW once before. I don't know how much can be attributed to my blog, but she's taking off now, and it might all come down to that. Pretty good feeling.

I saw my physician yesterday. I have a crush on her. She's about my age, a lovely woman, very smart, and I feel like she really likes and respects me. We talked for about a half hour yesterday, and I was squirming the whole time. I felt like I was being interrogated. We just talked about my health, and my illness. I wish I could be more comfortable. I know I can't date my doctor, but I'd still like to have some kind of special relationship with her.

5/10/2015

I had dinner with Dad the other night. Arranging it became very complicated. He first insisted that it had to be a Thursday. This isn't a good day for me, I leave the computer lab at 4 and have an appointment with my nurse following that. He insisted, it must be Thursday. I finally went with this, telling him I could do it at 6. This was repeated in a series of emails, but he became more and more confused. The restaurant was the Wild Ginger. He introduced me to it, and we've been there at least a dozen times. He doesn't seem to remember it any more. He finally asked me to send me one last email, with the time and place. I did this, frustrated at this point.

Then his case manager called. 6:00 would be too late. Their caretaker ended her shift at 7:30. We set the time for 5:00 and I canceled my appointment.

Barb was happy to see me. She tells me I'm her “favorite.” I guess I call her more often than the others, and she appreciates this. She still has high hopes of walking again. She struggles to sit up in her chair, but I wouldn't say anything to discourage her. It gives her hope and it may be the only thing that keeps her active. There might be more realistic goals, but it's what she wants to do, and if someone told her otherwise, she could be crushed.

Dad payed the bill. It came to $91. He payed cash. He was going to tip $6! The service was excellent. I imagine he wanted to keep it under 100, or just couldn't do the math. I slipped $10 in as we were leaving.

I got another email from Dad afterward. He asked me for the name of the restaurant. We ate there last year, and he was the one who chose it.

I'm getting comments and gestures in regard to my smoking. That's escalating things, like people are watching me and want me to know they are. It's very unnerving.

5/13/2015

Things are building up. I'm being phased out of the computer lab now. Don't know the reason for it, but others are trying to take over my shift. I'm ready to move on. Not sure what else I'd do. I have to have something to get me away from the apartment, even if just a few hours a week. I'm generally staying within a three or four block radius, and that isn't good.

I'm not getting the exercise I normally get walking, and have gained 20 pounds in the last year. But I don't feel comfortable going beyond this range right now. I'm not sure why. It's not exactly cozy at home, either. I have the music through the day, but in the evening every little sound upsets me, making me think there's someone standing at my door or my neighbor is at his window. I turn the music down, and try to be as quiet and still as possible, worrying that everything I do is being observed.

5/19/2015

I'm feeling drowsy through the days. Coffee might be having a reverse effect. I'm strong in the evening, but daytime I feel like I could sleep more, and I'm spending a lot of time resting on the couch, either meditating or doing puzzles. I'm getting plenty of sleep at night. I'm not waking up at strange hours anymore, and the schedule change on my olanzapine seems to be working there. I'm taking it much later. Now I'm getting up at 7 or 8, ready to go. Then after a few hours I begin to feel a little light-headed, like I need to rest. I sometimes step out for a coffee, but I consume so much caffeine it has little consequence. Just getting out for a little bit, away from my computer and to a different scene, seems to help some.

5/20/2015

There's a viral video right now that's bringing back memories to me. A shift supervisor at Starbucks snapped and lashed out at a customer over a straw, and carried on for several minutes. I've been there before. Working a high demand job for low pay, and feeling my world collapse. I would take it out on co-workers, though not as dramatically as this woman. I'd be fired within three to six months, or leave without notice. It was a vicious cycle. I wish this woman luck in putting it behind her.

My main source of porn, the Internet Archive, has upgraded the site after some 15 - 20 years. Until recently, the layout was a throwback to dial-up days. Unfortunately the porn is now getting filtered out immediately from what I can tell. Leaves me the options of paying for it, or risking malicious sites.

5/27/2015

I'm trying to hit it off with a woman downstairs, but she was a little cold this evening. We usually have a friendly, but brief, chat on the elevator, but I only

learned her name today. I told her I'd like to get together with her sometime and get to know her, but she rushed off the elevator without giving an answer.

How do I do it? I'm not a creep. I can engage women with small talk, and have had great relationships, until I try to take a little further. I'll never get over Thanh. We could talk for hours, just the two of us, until I asked her out. And I destroyed the relationship we did have, by not taking her answer at face value. Thinking about it, I don't think she ever actually said no. She was too sweet to hurt me. And I was her boss. This one, Janice, I'm not sure if I should take a chance.

5/30/2015

Had a great chat last night. It was by email, with a DJ from a public radio station in remote Wisconsin who always melts me with her sweet, sexy voice. She's a part time volunteer, and only hosts the Friday night blues program for three hours every other week. It makes my night when she does.

She was taking requests, so I sent her an email asking for a song from Jeff Beck's new album. I only half expected her to have it, but thought it would be an interesting initialization for a correspondence. She was thrilled to know she had a fan way out in Seattle. She might have checked my website, too, where I say some very good things about her. She didn't have the album, but put it on the list. We talked about the weather, and other small talk. I'll hear back from her after she's heard the album. She's as sweet in writing as she is on the air. It really made it a great night. Too bad we're so removed.

There's another woman seeming to invite me. She's in her mid 30s and works in one of the offices downstairs, and when we pass each other she almost seems to be happy to see me. I'd like to chat with her, but disappointment seems inevitable. Sometimes it seems like women like to tease me.

DJ Lisa Lee (cute name) has me thinking, maybe the only chance I have with women is through the blues. Not just a common interest, but a passion. The local blues society is a possibility. Unfortunately, local blues fans tend to be middle aged and up. I haven't quite accepted my transition yet. I get mail from AARP and take it as an insult.

6/08/2015

I saw Janice for the first time this month. She was getting off the elevator, but wouldn't even look at me. She turned away quickly. I don't know what I did. I thought I was polite and friendly, but something really put her off. I just asked her if she wanted to chat over a coffee sometime, or something like that. People ask me why I don't have a girlfriend, or why I've never been married. It's always been like this. Nobody else can tell me why.

6/12/2015

I've been very tired in recent days. I have a lot of energy in the evening, but daytime is different. It might be the schedule change on my meds, but by this time I should be adopted to this. I'm sleeping soundly. I'm not waking at 4AM as I was. I go to bed at 10 or 11 and sleep to 6:30 or 7. But after a few hours I begin to feel groggy and tired. Boredom and lack of exercise might be factors. I'm not going out very much. Sometimes just go across the street for a coffee, and the rest of the day is spent at the desk or on my couch. Pretty boring, it would make anyone a little drowsy. But I don't have a desire to go out right now. I avoid socializing, and money is a concern. I've always been reclusive, but I'm in a rut right now. I've even been skipping days at the computer lab. This is the kind of thing I need now.

5/15/2015

My computer is toasted again. I thought it might be, but I didn't want to believe it. I don't know how he does it, or what to do about it. I have a router and a firewall, but obviously that's not enough. I'm offline for a few hours at least, maybe days.

I don't know why he targets me. I'm pretty boring, and there's nothing on my computer of any importance or value. He knows what he's doing, why doesn't he go after something that would be a real prize, maybe government or corporate networks. That could be a mother lode for a hacker, but he's content to attack an amateur user. Just for fun, I guess.

It's embarrassing, but it shouldn't be. People with far more training and experience, and higher pay, are hacked all the time, and the stakes are much higher. This guy probably isn't near the level of the Chinese hackers who broke into the government personnel databases recently, but it might be a consolation.

7/01/2015

My funds are running dry and I have to do something soon. I have a few thousand accumulated in a retirement fund from the college, and it would be very helpful right now. It should get me by for at least a year. The problem is my medical coverage comes from three different sources, and the one covering my long-term care at the mental health facility has a cap of $2000 on available resources. I can't risk losing this. A financial worker explains that this covers services such as a “case manager.” My case manager is also my nurse, so I wonder if she could be covered by the same source as my psychiatrist.

Giving up cigarettes is another thing to consider. It's costing me two to three hundred a month. I don't feel like this is the right time to do this. Cigarette taxes are the most regressive there are. Smoking is by far most prevalent among those of low income such as myself.

I need support if I'm to quit smoking. Not smoking cessation groups, I just don't do well in groups. AA, group therapy, mingling with co-workers. For most it's therapeutic. I never feel comfortable, and talk little. When I talk, I hide my problems and feelings, opposite of what groups are for. I need a soul mate. Not a friend like Teresa, one I can open up to. A woman who will love and accept me unconditionally. I've never been able to find this.

I'm getting good vibes from a woman from the office next door. Pretty gal, very friendly but she's always going the other way. I'm looking for a chance to stop and speak to her, and see if something really clicks this time. I'm never really a good judge of this, though.

7/09/2015

Spoke to my nurse Alyssa on Monday about several things, but particularly about my experience with women. She could only suggest that I keep trying. I'm also scheduled to meet someone for CBT therapy. I hadn't heard of it before, but it's an old concept, and from what I've read it isn't as effective as it was at one time. Social changes and individual needs evolving create new demands on psychology, and old ideas become stale.

Tuesday morning I went to the cafeteria for a coffee. As I walked to the elevator, an attractive middle aged woman walked past me. She went to the stairs. We arrived at the same time, and I was just behind her. She turned and told me to go ahead. I smiled and said thank you, and continued to the espresso bar. She stopped. I was at the bar for about five minutes, and she stood alone in the middle of the floor, watching me, and waiting for me to leave. Like she was avoiding me. I didn't see where she went when I sat at the table.
I got my haircut yesterday, and the stylist was a very beautiful young lady. Her name was Kelley. We talked constantly, and she was very pleasant and intelligent. Fun to talk to. As we chatted, she leaned forward, displaying her large breasts on her short, slender frame. Couldn't help gawking for a moment. When she was done, she of course asked me if she could do anything else. I said no, thanks. Then a few moments later, as she began cleaning, she asked me a second time, “is there anything else I can do for you?” Yea, maybe she's just conditioned to say that, and it's habit. But I wondered if she was making a pass at me. I said no again, and we checked out. Now I can't forgive myself for not swapping cards with her.

7/10/2015

The air conditioner was reset. I had the preset temperature at 74°, but it had been changed to 78°. The AC, lighters, batteries; I've got to change the lock. The bolt on the door matches the handle lock, so if someone cracks one, they immediately have the second. I was gong to get a new bolt at one time, but with installation the price was a little steep. I don't have a choice now.

7/14/2015

I'm hearing people talk today. It started with a couple of neighbors talking about a group of people having “no life,” than one whispered to the other. The other said “I know.” The one whispering was Roger, one who I helped years ago, tutoring him in a literacy program. After we were done with that, he took a strong dislike towards me. My guess is out of resentment.

I've been hearing comments all day since. Getting looks. I don't know if there's a connection, but people are talking. I'm sure there are rumors. People here don't have anything better to do than watch people enter and leave the building, and being a smoker, I'm under a microscope.

The gal at the smoke shop was very friendly this week, almost seeming excited to see me. She immediately began to talk about her vacation, and wanted to show me her car. I almost thought she was going to take me for a spin. She's nice, pretty, and I need to ask her out sometime. I only drop by there every ten days for a carton of smokes, but I might stop there to get a lighter, just to talk to her for a few minutes.

7/16/2015

I stopped by the smoke shop this morning. I was going to get a lighter, and talk to the woman at the counter. It was closed. I didn't see her car, and I'm not sure she works Thursdays, so I moved on. I might try again Monday.

I missed work again Tuesday. I didn't feel like going. Being a volunteer, they don't complain, but for my own health, I have to bring myself to do this like it'e a real job. I have to keep myself in the groove and be ready down the line when I go back to work. I have no doubt this will happen eventually. It also gets me out a few days a week, something that's hard for me on many days.

7/22/2015

I spoke to the gal at the smoke shop again. I thought about getting her number, but something stopped me. Nerves, I guess. It was a good conversation, and from what I gather, she's available. It won't happen if I don't ask.

7/26/2015

I have to do something pretty soon on my retirement fund. My savings are wiped out, and my monthly SS payment isn't getting me by. It looks like I'd be okay if I weren't over resources for too long, how long I don't know. But I'd have to spend $1000 pretty quickly. I don't know how I'd use it it at this point. I wish I had problems like this more often.

My intruder friend is back. Don't know that he's been away, but from time to time he lets me know he's here by filling lines in the command terminal. I'm offline tonight, missing my favorite radio program, All Blues. It's a six hour show with great music spanning mainly from the 50s to contemporary hits. Great DJ, and he reads my blog. Makes it kind of special to me. I'll listen to it on the box player, but it isn't close to the quality of the stream on my computer.

Some things are improving. People seem friendly, and I'm not looking out or listening for intruders or enemies, with the exception of the hack on my computer. Talking to Gail, the CBT therapist, seems to be helpful. We've so far talked about my past, and a lot has come out, from my childhood to my drinking years to the paranoia that began to set on after that. I've gotten a lot off of my chest.

8/09/2015

I went to a rally for Social Security expansion yesterday. The main reason was to hear Bernie Sanders. It went well for me, I was calm, relaxed; all eyes were fixed on the stage, and there was little chatter other than cheering the speakers. That Sanders was interrupted and never addressed the crowd was disappointing, but it was generally a good day.

This morning was different. I went to the smoke shop and grocery store on Broadway, and as I got off the sidewalk was overflowing by the Sunday brunch crowd. I went right ahead, but as I passed I felt heads turning towards me, and the chatter, even though muffled by one another, seemed personal, like they were trying to hit me at a weak point. The feeling lasted for half an hour, until I got on the bus and went home.

8/12/2015

What is it with the weather? It was warm and sunny this morning, and everyone was all cheerful and smiles. Then clouds started to blow over, the sky turning grey. As I left UPS, I heard someone yelling “nigger.” I couldn't tell who he was angry at. At the bus stop, somebody driving by called me a dick. Didn't see who it was, but heard it clearly over the music.

8/17/2015

Miserable weekend. After seizures on Friday and Saturday, I was weak and groggy on Sunday. I'm still tired today. I really don't need to face things as they're playing out this morning.

The building assistant started things by refusing to free an elevator. One was stuck on the floor, and she was cleaning the other one. I asked her to free the one she was cleaning. Pretty reasonable, she was just wiping the walls, she could easily do that as it was moving. She refused, and I ended up walking the stairs to my 17th floor apartment. There's been something building upo between us, and

I'm not sure why. When she first arrived, she seemed friendly, and she doesn't have problems with other residents. But after I tried to start a conversation with her early on, she became cold and bitter toward me. She wouldn't return a smile, and avoided a conversation. I'll admit, she's a pretty woman and I kind of hoped something might click as we talked. But it was just polite, small talk. Asked her name, how she liked the place. Maybe she saw something in my eyes.

The hack is back, and I'm not sure what I'm going to do at this point. I'll have to clean and rebuild the machine, but that's futile right now. He pretty much owns my machine. I'll go back to WireShark and see if I can get any clues. At this point, I don't know where he's coming from, so it isn't just a matter of blacklisting him.

8/18/2015

Dad had what was either a mini-stroke or a seizure last night. I'm not sure what they determined, I'll have to check my messages. I turn my phone off at night, so I didn't learn of it until I got up this morning. It sounded a lot more serious to me than it really was. I spent most of the day with him as they were testing him: Strength and coordination, heart scan, brain scan. I don't know what other tests he had overnight. When he couldn't answer questions, he took indirect suggestions: He'd been waking up feeling strange in recent weeks, but couldn't describe the feeling. The doctor mentioned the possibility of a seizure, and Dad said, “yea, it felt like I'd had a seizure.” He does that too often, and it doesn't help him.

Carmin, his power of attorney, was there nearly the entire time. She's more help to Dad and Barb than anyone else at this time. He has a very good care facility. She mentioned that the last place they were at wouldn't have called 911. They wouldn't have seen it as an emergency. Dad hasn't paid close attention to his own health of late, being more concerned with helping Barb recover. That should change now.

I've been offline for 24 hours. Makes for some long days, I don't have any projects to work on and most of my activity is on the Internet. Pretty boring without it.

9/11/2015

I got myself a new toy with the retirement refund. It's a tablet, and it's a very nice device. I had thought they had too many limitations to be practical. Why not get a laptop? But it's much more powerful than a smartphone, has a sharp 8” display, has an expansion slot supporting 128GB, and is very easy to manipulate. I wish I could take text messages on it. I'm still figuring out ways I'll be able to use this.

I have some nice things, but they're just things. I don't have anybody to share them with.

10/02/2015

I feel like I'm being attacked from every front. I haven't resolved the problem on my computer. I've had some strange problems on my phone: Disconnecting inadvertently, and last night the camera was turned on as I was exiting the Twitter app. I frantically tried to close it, but eventually a photo was taken. Today when I returned to my apartment from the laundry, the doorknob was unlocked. The bolt was locked, but I always keep the knob locked, even when I'm home. It was strange when a little later, the knob was jammed. I don't know who's doing this to me, but I'm not even comfortable at home. Ironically, it makes me afraid to go out as well. I'm not going far, I'm in no mood to socialize, and I worry that I might meet this person or people. Going to lunch with Mom tomorrow. I'd like to take a raincheck on that, but I already skipped a gathering at her place last weekend. She'd understand if I explained it to her, even if it doesn't make a lot of sense, but I can't keep letting her down.

10/16/2015

I'm fighting a nasty cold this week, and have found it to be a convenient excuse to get out of going to the mental health center. I'm going to call Gayle in a few minutes to cancel out session this afternoon. I've canceled several appointments already, so this might not go well with her. I don't do the homework she gives me, and I'm not getting the same effect that I was in the first few weeks, when we spoke of my past and experiences. Now it's just hokey “therapy” that doesn't get through to me. I've snapped at her a few times, not sure why. I'm getting frustrated, and starting to dread the whole thing.

I've mostly been confined to my apartment this week. It hasn't been bad, but I haven't done much with the time. The neighbor's gone, moved to another site, so I'm not getting jitters there. There hasn't been a crowd in the hallway, as there often has been. I still sense I'm being tracked on my computer. Whoever it is must have it in for me.

10/20/2015

There's a woman at the mental health center whom I'm really becoming fond of. Her name is Dotty, and that fits her perfectly. She's a friendly, gabby, lovely woman, and not just on the surface. She sometimes seems like a bubblehead, but that's part of the beauty. I stopped by her office to ask her to open the computer lab. They don't trust volunteers with keys. Asked her how she was doing, and she took that as an invitation. She'd bought a new car, and talked about it for at least five minutes. When I asked, she couldn't tell me what kind of car it is. Even while talking continuously, she gave me plenty of invitations to step in. I've never driven a car in my life, but I was fascinated with hers. When we went to the lab, she apologized for going on so long. I told her it was a pleasure, and we hadn't seen each other in a while. Later, I stopped by her office again to ask her to join

me for a coffee after work. She was away, and the opportunity had passed. I've been getting kind of burned out going to the MHC, but I can't let this pass me by.

10/25/2015

I asked a barista to join me for lunch tomorrow. I don't usually go for big ass women, but she has a cute face, and she was recently washing windows and I couldn't keep my eyes off of her. I was really turned on. Then today she wore stunning earrings, and I just had to go for it. She was polite, but said no. She mentioned that she has a boyfriend. She didn't freak out, as happens to me so often. I can take this kind of rejection.

Public housing has annual inspections in which they come to see if residents are keeping their units up. If you fail the first inspection, they leave a notice, and a ten-day eviction notice is sent in the mail. I've lived here 25 years, and I've never satisfied them on the first inspection. Not once. They'll return a second and a third time. It's very invasive, and unless someone is mounting a safety or health hazard, it isn't any of their business. The next inspection is tomorrow, and I've been getting caught up on housework all weekend. I'm wasting my time.

10/27/2015

Have my eyes on another barista, Mayra at the hospital cafeteria. I don't get many opportunities to talk to her. There's almost always a line at the cash register and I'm having trouble building up nerve anyway. But there was one chance I missed: She was free for a little while, and came over to the espresso machine for the lull. As I waited, she watched me, smiling. It looked like an invitation, but I passed it up. Trying to come up with a strategy, or hoping for the perfect opportunity.

Why's it always the barista? I guess that's where I spend a lot of time. And the women there are usually very friendly, even if perhaps paid to be so.

10/31/2015

I still go around with the feeling of being watched by people, as much as ever, but now I'm getting good vibes from it. It's like people have come to see me differently. Maybe they're reading my stuff online, or I'm walking differently or smiling more. Maybe they've just come to see another side of me. I'll take it, as long as it continues.

Stacy Jones won an international award for blues song of the year. She deserves it, but I'm kind of excited that my blog helped get things in motion for her. I'm feeling inspired right now, and after a month away from it, I'm starting to get back in the groove. I'm going to begin profiling local blues artists, and Ayron Jones will be one of the first on the list. He's already rising pretty quickly, but maybe I can put him over the top.

11/04/2015

I had an amazing conversation today. I'd been at the cafe earlier, and a remark by one of the waitresses made me uneasy. It shouldn't have been a big deal: I wished her a good afternoon, and she said “we'll still be here later,” as if to comment on how predictable I am. I couldn't shake it off. Then a series of small events built up, strange looks or laughs. Or even people seeming to ignore me. I felt very uncomfortable.

I have a new nurse, Kieara, a recent grad who seems very excited about what she's doing. She has a beautiful, vibrant smile, and is just someone you can immediately talk to. She seems very sincere. I had an appointment with her this afternoon. I told her what I was feeling. She asked what usually helps me get over this. I told her listening music, or writing about it. So we went into a long talk about music. We talked for almost an hour. I was impressed by her knowledge, and she even knew more than a smidgen about the blues. I would so like to talk to her more, not in the constraints of the mental health center. And talk about things other than music, like who she is. She seems so interesting.

It's 7:30 PM, and I haven't eaten a bite today. This a running problem. I don't have a mental appetite, no desire to prepare a meal. I've been heating up a can of soup or ramen noodles, just to eat something. I'm out of these tonight. I'll have to go back to Subway. I can't afford to do this often

11/05/2015

I'm not imagining this. Women are really warming up to me. Making a point to smile at me, some showing me pictures of their kids! What to make of that? I'm holding back, not having been in this territory before.

Saturday, 11/07/2015

On the photos: There's an elderly woman downstairs with whom I've had a warm friendship for years. She brings me cakes from time to time. She's a great neighbor, although conversations are limited. She speaks fluent English, but I have a difficult time listening through her eastern accent. I'm not sure of her name.

This lady has a daughter who is also her care taker. A stunning woman, she is about my age, with a fond, affectionate smile and a soft, friendly voice. For some reason, I've never really taken to her before now. But the other day, riding the elevator with her, she pulled out pictures of her daughter. I wasn't sure what to say, except that she is a beautiful young woman. The moment passed, but she was flirting with me in her own way. Or else hoping to match me up. She's usually here on Saturdays. I'm going to invite the two of them to lunch, ostensibly to repay them for all of the cakes.

Wednesday, 11/11/2015

I haven't seen the woman in over a week. I don't know her or her mother's names, or even the apartment number. She usually arrives at 8 AM, and is pretty punctual. I'm often out smoking at that time. This may have been an opportunity slipped by.

Sunday, 11/15/2015

Rejected again. She wants to be with her kids. Doesn't have time to go out for lunch. Her daughter is a young adult, and I don't think she needs really needs to have her mother around as she implies. She may be very protective, though. She put's it on herself to take care of her mother, something most people wouldn't do, at least not to the degree she does. I wonder why her mother doesn't just move in with her?

Friday, 11/27/2015

I spent Thanksgiving alone yesterday. That was by choice. By the time I make all the required visits, these family gatherings are longer than a normal work day. In this case, I would have spent a few hours with Dad at the care center, then gone on to Mom's for more food and visiting. In all, these events take up 10 to 12 hours of the day, including bus time. My mother suggests I stay for the night, as if that would make things easier. It isn't that I'm not happy to see them; it just becomes an onerous task on holidays.

Saturday, 12/12/2015

Christmas is coming, and as it has been for years, there are two family gatherings, Mom's on Christmas Eve and Lori's the following afternoon. I've never liked the arrangement, and this year will pass on the Christmas day invitation. It's a holiday, not a duty. Lori will be disappointed, but not surprised.

I read a short essay by blues singer Beth Hart on bipolar disorder and how it affects her music. I can identify with some of it; schizophrenia and bipolar have some common symptoms. In particular, when I stop taking medication for a time, I'm on a euphoria for a time, a week or maybe two. I feel energized and creative. But I can't manage this, and get nothing done. When she reaches a manic or depressed state, she harnesses it and writes some of her best music. That's very special, and I wish I could have this ability. I have to settle for being “stable.”

Thursday, 12/17/2015

Christina isn't very appealing anymore. Now I have my eye on another barista at Dive, Danielle. She's the opposite of Christina: Short, petite frame, warm smile, cute little butt. Trying to get an opportunity to talk to her, but she's on the machine during the busy hours. We spoke a little today, and I got a good feeling. I'm not a very good judge of women, though. Sometimes a smile will melt me, and it's hard to take it just as a smile.

12/18/2015

New manager in the building, and one of the first things she's doing is posting notices that there will be a crackdown on smoking. Laura was a smoker herself, and enforced the rule loosely, giving me a couple of warnings. Now I only smoke when I'm in for the night, well after the staff has left. But this new person appears to be an anti-smoking nazi, and I'll have to be cautious. I keep telling myself to switch to vapor cigarettes, but that just isn't the same.

12/23/2015

I really seem to be hitting it off with Danielle (not sure that's her name, have to ask her). She's been very friendly, and this morning, it was like she waited for me to get up to leave, and almost bumped into me. We laughed. Is this for real?

I'm very worried about Jeff. He has medical problems, he's been out of work for what seems like years, and he just won't take any advice. He's always resented me, but he won't even listen to Mom. He did ask me recently for help in finding a job. I'm not in the market, and couldn't refer him to a job, but gave him some suggestions that might get him on his way. He rejected all of them.

He won't apply for medical insurance, although he'd probably qualify for Medicaid, nor for food stamps. He has no source of income, and if he doesn't get on ACA, he stands to be fined $695. He has to take care of his hip problem and skin disease. I want to refer him to the mental health center, but know that would be futile, and probably would anger him.

12/28/2015

I was really set to get Danielle's phone number today. It didn't work out. I barely got past “how are you,” then drawing a blank and repeating what she said. I wanted to get away from there as quickly as possible.

I brought up health care to Jeff when he was driving me to the bus stop. We went to Mom's on Christmas Eve. He listened. I explained to him why he would have to do this, and needs it. He eventually asked if he could count on me to help him out when he gets around to doing it. I was surprised, but said yes. I later directed him to the ACA website with information and links. But he's listening. This is a good sign. We've never been close, but maybe we can develop something out of this.

Dad's finally admitting he has a memory problem. It's gotten so bad there was no denying it anymore. He couldn't remember Jeff's name in the same phone conversation. He's tracing it to a mini-stroke he had last year, but it goes back much farther than that. Now that he's accepting it, he might also accept help on it, something he hasn't believed he's needed. I'm sure there's therapy to help him adjust to it. Techniques to improve his skills.

12/31/2015

I'm down to thirty seven bucks until the third. The refrigerator is full, so I should be okay. Joe invited me to New years at the Jazz Alley, with dinner and the show all paid. Pretty cool. Drinks are separate but I only drink Pepsi. A Latin jazz band is playing. Watching them on YouTube, they aren't Chuck Mangione, but will make a nice evening.

Found out Danielle performs at a circus. She's a stilt-walker, or whatever you would call it. There's a show tonight, and I would have loved to see her, but I couldn't pass up Joe's offer, and probably couldn't afford the tickets, anyway. We should have an interesting conversation on Monday.

1/09/2016

Another one succumbs to lung disease. It happens often in a low income housing complex. Smoking is very prevalent, and oxygen tanks are a common sight. It should be enough to scare me straight, but cigarettes are my only sin, and people need at least one vice. Prevalence is especially high among schizophrenics, too. I forget the number, but it's over 50%, maybe 75%, compared to 15% of the general population. My physician always asks me if I'm ready to quit, but doesn't push it. My lungs are still okay, but having smoked for nearly 40 years, I'm lucky so far.

Jeff's finally getting help. He won't discuss it with me, but Mom tells me he's been to a mental health center and is applying for Medicaid. He just hasn't been taking care of himself, and isn't in any condition to work right now, even if he could find a job. He's been off so long, employers aren't giving him serious consideration. It has him in deep depression. This is what he has to do now. He's needed it for a long time, and I'm glad he's finally coming to realize it.

1/12/2016

I have a special way with dogs. On the elevator this morning, a woman was carting her dog in her walker. I looked at the dog, and he was looking at me. I smiled and scratched his head. The woman said “he didn't bite you!” Then another woman entered, and reached to pet the dog. He snapped at her, and began yapping. The dog's master explained that he bites everybody except her. Dogs just take a liking to me, I'm not sure why. If I could harness this and extend it to people, especially women, a lot of my problems might be solved.

Dad is more confused than ever. He knows his memory is fading, but at the same time he's talking about re-entering real estate and putting Jeff and even Jim to work for him. He's offered me a job, giving Barb physical therapy, basically. I have no such training or experience, and it wouldn't be a good situation, anyway. He knows Jeff's struggling, but Jeff demands too much money. He seems to think Jim's struggling, too. I don't know what gives him that idea. He hasn't been in

contact with him. He's in Philly, anyway, and the idea is silly. I have modest income, and am stable right now, and am enjoying the longest period of relative peace in my life that I can remember. Volunteering, writing, doing things I enjoy. If I go back to the workplace, I will have to think long and hard about it.

I talk to Dad in the evening, and Lori tells me that is when the problems are most acute. I can understand this. But I've been calling him for months, usually twice a week, and he seems to be degenerating. I'll call him earlier in the day tomorrow and see if my concerns might be misplaced.

1/21/2016

I'm getting stronger and more comfortable as time passes. It's been three years since I left the college, two years since my last disaster in the workforce. My main problem now is money. I need to consider going back to work, but that would put me back to square one. I'd be starting all over, and it's always a struggle for me. It's the same for a lot of people, but I've never had the social skills or the perseverance to last more than a few months on the job. How I lasted at the college for so long, I'm not sure. I wasn't very congenial, and never developed any friendships off-site, except for Peter. I was respected for my knowledge, but my abrasive, guarded behavior put me at odds with many people. At the end, everybody wanted to see me go.

Volunteering, people don't care if I miss a day. There are no deadlines. And I work alone. This isn't a situation I'd have in a real job. If I could do this for pay, it would be perfect for me. That won't happen, and I have to do something to get by. Right now, I don't know what that would be.

2/14/2016

I'm being watched everywhere. I keep looking out the peephole in the door, to reassure myself neighbors aren't listening in. There isn't much to hear besides the music, and occasional swearing. I get uncomfortable when people remark on my going out to smoke. People are generally noisy here, they like to see what you have in the mail or bag. Something I hate about this place. In recent months, I've had frequent visits from the management. By the lease agreement, they're required to give me a 48 hour notice before entering my apartment. I've been getting these notices every week for the last couple of months, and I'm tired of it. It's intrusive, and I stress about it until the date.

I have intruders on my computer. They have more information about me then I know myself. I've begun to take a defeatist attitude about this. I'm beginning to realize Facebook is gathering more data than they imply. I feel like every move I make is under surveillance. I live simply, and with guesswork, somebody could easily predict what I'll do next. Medication won't change this.

2/19/2016

Damn, Danielle is really warming up to me. I have to do something now before this moment disappears. Dana Fuchs is coming to town in March. Danielle being a dancer, I think she would really appreciate Fuch's energy and agility. Damn good singer. I have to get past the small talk first. Ask her some questions, invite her for a coffee. We talk about her shows. I could ask her what brought her there. Don't know if she has a boyfriend. I don't even know how old she is. There's plenty to talk about, but I just go on my way after a few minutes, sitting alone, sipping my coffee and glaring at my phone. I was never gifted with spontaneity or self-assurance. I'm usually awkward and reluctant. I'm beginning to feel confident talking to Danielle, but the next step is the hardest.

2/22/2016

A lot can change in a day. I saw Danielle for the first time since Friday, and she didn't even look at me. She was taking orders, and mine was already up, but there was no smile or “good morning.” It isn't as if she was really rushed. I'll hold out hope, but this might be another illusion.

I have one pack of cigarettes, and I'm telling myself this will be the last. I'm coughing and hacking, and the cost is busting me. Minus smoking, things are very tight, but I might be able to stay on budget. I'm thinking of some of the things I might be able to do if I quit. Go to an occasional concert, eat at a good restaurant. It's a nice trade-off.

3/03/2016

I got my hearing back. My left ear has been blocked due to an infection since December. I've seen doctors, and took medication they prescribed, but it only cleared up tonight blowing my nose. The music really sounds nice now.

I'm going to be spending more time at the mental health center. I'm just not getting out enough, and dread going far from home. My nurse is urging me to attend a program that guides people to building structure, confidence and self-motivation. I don't have a much of these right now. I'm only volunteering once a week, and things like the blog are on the back burner. I need to try this course.

My sleep pattern has been has been off lately. I'll go to bed at 10 or 11, do a puzzle and listen to the news, then fall asleep by midnight. Then I wake at some early hour, like 5 or 6, with lots of energy, at least for a couple of hours. Then I'm feeling tired for the rest of the day, cat napping or just resting on the recliner. This is also affecting my eating pattern. On a few days recently, it's occurred to me at 8:00 at night that I haven't eaten that day. I'll heat up a can of soup or pour a bowl of cereal. I'm not losing weight, but this isn't healthy.

3/04/2016

When things turn up missing, I go into a spin. Small things, like lighters or dishes. The first thing that comes to my mind is that someone has broken into my

apartment and stolen the item. It doesn't make sense; I have several things of value that could be sold on the street. If someone were to break in, they'd almost certainly take one of those. Not nickle and dime items that would have no return value. It just wouldn't be worth the risk. But I think maybe, they're doing it just to make me think I'm crazy, or to play games with my head.

Last night, I wrote a check for the rent and had it ready send in the mail. It was on my desk, right in front of me, where I wouldn't forget it. Then a little while ago, I saw that it was gone, but couldn't remember dropping it in the mailbox. I went into near-panic. Somebody must have been here and stolen it, I thought. It wouldn't be a small thing. I kept deliberating, did I send it out and forget about it? Or does somebody have their hands on my checking account info? Some things are so routine that you go through the motions without giving it any thought. This happens with my medications from time to time. I can't remember doing it, no matter how hard I try, and end up doubling it for that day. It makes me a little dizzy and incoherent for a few hours. The mailbox, though, just seems like something that I would be able to recall. I don't send more than three or four letters a month.

I finally remembered having an envelope under my arm as I was going out for a smoke. But I don't remember anything from there. I'm guessing that I dropped it on the way, not noticing at the time. I've seen no envelopes in the hall or elevators. Maybe, somebody was courteous and put it in the mail for me. Or they discarded it as trash. Or, they kept it, with the enclosed check. I'll have no way of finding out for at least a week. Thing to do is call housing and find out if it was received. If it wasn't, I could be in trouble.

3/25/2016

I had dinner with Dad and Barb on Friday. This is never a very pleasant occasion; seeing Barb struggling to feed herself, sagging over to one side in her chair, fighting to get words out. And Dad with his dimming memory and unable to grasp the reality of the situation. He talks about the two of them going back into business, once she walks again, asking me to help out in this. He can't tell me exactly what I'd do. He has no idea. I told him to talk to me when he has a plan and some details. He may just want to spend more time with me, although I think he really believes that they'll be back in the real estate market soon. I don't tell him it's impossible; having these hopes helps him keep his sanity.
Dad asked me to design a “business card” for Barb and himself. Said he'd pay me $100 for it. I need the money. I'm not sure how he'll use it, but if it makes him feel good, that's all that matters. Problem is he doesn't have email or text messaging anymore. I have no way to send him the draft design. He doesn't even understand what texting is now. Or what a cellphone is. He used a cellphone for many years, it was essential in his business. Now he just uses the house phone at the care center. He's forgotten so much. He doesn't even remember the house he lived at up to a couple of years ago. They lived there for over 30 years.

I seem to be the only contact they have with family. Lori visits them from time to time. She told me Cyndy was visiting weekly. Dad insists she hasn't been there in weeks or months. I call them a couple of times a week, and they really appreciate that. Barb tells me I'm her favorite son and am the only one who keeps in touch. I feel bad that I don't see them more often. I join them for dinner once a month or so. But someone else has to start giving them some time. I feel like I'm carrying the burden.

I went to Safeco Field this afternoon to join the Bernie Sanders rally. I was to meet Joe. When I saw the line, I turned around. I thought there was a separate event at the football stadium, but people were just lined up that far, and beyond. I had a cigarette as I left. A group of four or five made a comment to me that I didn't quite hear, but it sounded like they were shaming me for turning around. Ended with something about my smoke. I walked on, ignoring them, but looking at people and feeling like I was being assessed for my behavior, people showing disapproval of my decision to move on. Caucus is tomorrow morning, that should go better.

I've been talking to Kiera and Gail about my self-neglect. Not eating well, poor hygiene, erratic sleep patterns. Lack of motivation. We're talking about depression. I have an appointment with my shrink next week. There will probably be a change in my medication. I don't know how confident I am about this, but something has to be done. On some evenings it occurs to me at 8:00 or so that I haven't eaten at all that day. I'm not hungry, but I'll heat some soup or some noodles just to get something in my system.

I've been thinking about addictions. At one time, the term was exclusively used for drug and alcohol dependency. I remember, though, when this changed. Gamblers had a 12-Step program, but in the 70s, a woman from California wrote a book and did the talk shows, asserting that she was addicted to sex. She claimed it was “just like heroin” for her, although she had no idea what heroin addiction and withdrawals are like. People began to talk, many joking and some serious, saying they were addicted to sex, too. The reach of addiction took off from there.

I mention this because I have habits that others might call “addictions.” There's the music I play everywhere I go. There's cigarettes. The internets. And coffee. The only one of these I'd regard as an obsession is smoking. The music keeps me at peace when I go out, although I can turn it off at any time for a conversation. I've been offline for days at a time, and the worst part was boredom. Coffee is something I can indulge in without concern for long-term consequences. I guess when I enjoy something, I go all out.

3/26/2016

The caucus start out awkward. Having the feeling that people were watching, waiting for me to do something wrong, I hardly said a word while I was there. It settled down after a little while. Joe showed up. He didn't understand that he had

to go to his district caucus to participate. How he ended up in my district, I do not know. Maybe he felt more comfortable with someone he knows. He left when it became clear he could only observe, and I was preoccupied by the discussion and debate. I left early too. At the end, I was sitting at the end of the last table, not hearing anything that was being said. They weren't talking very loud, and generally were looking away from me. I was getting itchy anyway. I handed in my voting form, but now I'm afraid I may have left too early. I'm not sure if the second vote was the final vote, and that's the one that counts.

I've had two great dinners in a row. Having been getting by heating soup or noodles, this is a good sign. I'm motivated to cook again. We'll see if this continues, and starts to affect some other problems I'm having. With the rally and the caucus, I've been doing a lot of walking this couple of days, and that might be the main factor. I need to do that more often. I used to walk a lot. Then this last 2 or 3 years, I've been avoiding it. Not sure why. Got tired of doing the hills, I guess. I'm eating less, but gaining weight. Large servings of processed foods will do that kind of thing.

3/27/2016

Easter Sunday. I declined an invitation to visit my sister's for brunch. I would have had to get out too early, like 8AM. I'm sure they had fun without me.

Just finished corresponding with Jeff. This has become my preferred method of communicating with him, for two reasons: I run out minutes quickly, with thousands of texts available; and, it avoids petty arguments we tend to get into when we talk by voice. After a few messages, he asked me to call instead, not appreciating long conversations by this method. I explained to him the first reason, but called.

After a few minutes, we were abruptly disconnected. Ironically, I had run out of minutes. After adding minutes online, I called and got his voice mail. Told him what happened. He called back.

We were talking about basketball. At some point, he asked me how many games a team had won. The question didn't immediately register to me, and I gave out a “huh?” Then in a second or two I answered the question. This annoyed him. He made it very clear. I tried to be calm and civil, but it was just bickering after that. I told him in honesty that this is the other reason I don't call him on the phone. He made it clear that's the only way he wants to do it. So I guess we're cut off.

At our age, in our condition, and in Dad's condition, we should be bonding like never before. I'm afraid this won't happen. I'm drifting farther apart from my family, and I don't know how to really live alone.

3/30/2016

It gets worse with Jeff. In our phone conversation, he told me that he'd interviewed for a warehouse job in Kent, and felt pretty good about his chances of getting an offer. What he didn't say was that it's the job at the new Amazon disbursement center that I referred him to. He won't admit it when I help him. I mentioned on the phone that it's a good idea, pretty standard really, to send a follow-up message to the interviewer, thanking them and adding information that didn't come up in the interview process. He scoffed at this. He said if all 25 people interviewed for this job sent a message, there would be no advantage in doing it. By this logic, I said, if everybody but you sends a message, how will that reflect on you? He gave me a “tsk,” and we went on.

4/01/2016

My rent check was mailed after all. It ended up costing me $42 for the cancellation, a $25 cancellation fee from the bank and $17 from the housing agency. I'm relieved, anyway.

I saw Dr. Ries last week to talk about my situation. He prescribed me 300mg bupropion, and told me to give up smoking. Yea, right. He indicated that the med helps people quit. This really isn't a time for this, but no time is for me. I had a cigarette after leaving his office.

4/27/2016

I might give up smoking after all. I'm down to $5 until the 3rd. I'll be smoking my last cigarette tonight, or until one of two checks come in the mail. My tax refund won't be here very soon, I prognosticated until the first week of April before completing and mailing the form. Didn't expect a refund. I thought that the tax I paid on cashing out my retirement fund would be kept by the government. I was surprised to see at least part of it will be returned to me. If I read things correctly.

Then there's the energy refund that comes every year. I had difficulty finding the papers needed, and filed a week or two later than most people did. The first batch of checks went out the week of the 11th, so it could be coming any time.

I'm broke except for a pocketful of change. I was in this situation in a recent dream, and I'm wondering if it was a premonition. I'm paying close attention to events today.

5/03/2016

Got through the month on another loan from Mom. That was a relief, and other things are looking up as a result. I've never cared much about money, but being broke and struggling to get by from check to check isn't a way to live. I'm thinking about working part-time. My capacity right now would be something like washing dishes. I couldn't handle the pressure of going back into IT. I'm way behind on technology, anyway.

5/04/2016

Damn, I'm dizzy this morning. The new med doesn't help, it's had me disoriented already. Yesterday, there was a guy sleeping in the computer lab. I didn't even notice. Topher happened to walk by. He grabbed security, and the guy was out cold. I tried to describe an issue on one of the computers to tech staff the other day, but struggled to give details, let alone talk in technical terms.

This morning, I was at the cafeteria next door for my ritual espresso. Sometimes it's the only socialization I have. When I was in line, I noticed a lovely woman leaning on the counter. I hoped she notice me. Then I realized she was the one working next door with the unbroken, everlasting smile. Except when she looks at me. She's so beautiful, so radiant, but won't even give me a hello.

I stood near her at the counter. I should have known better. My ears began burn, my face turned red, and I Was like AN awkward teen Sitting next to a cheerleader. There was a long line, and it lasted 10 minutes or more. People avoided looking at me, out of sympathy, I suppose. She left first, but the pain continued, long after I went to sit down.

I sat for 40 minutes, trying to read the news on the phone, but looking up frequently. I stumbled when I got up, and my head went into a daze. The stumbling continued walking home. Still in a daze an hour later, but calming down.

10:00 PM. Still dizzy. I laid down for an hour this morning and felt better, then went to the smoke shop and grocery. The grocery store was crowded. I kept running up to people, trying to get to the back. My head started to spin again. I felt people gazing at me, all the way out of the store and at the bus stop. I guess I always get this feeling, but there's an intensity sometimes.

I checked online and the dizziness, as well as itching I've been experiencing today, are common side effects of the bupropion. I concluded that this was the source. I called my nurse at the mental health center, and she contacted my doctor. I'll be switching over to something else, but for now I'm off the bupropion.

It occurred to me that this isn't the first time this has happened. I was feeling dizzy for a couple of days a year or so ago. The physician, an intern, suggested it was dehydration. I'm drinking plenty water now, and tea instead of soda. I don't think this has anything to do with it.

5/05/2016

On my way out yesterday, I noticed that my new neighbor's door was open. I walked past to the elevator. Waited about a minute. As I was getting on, I noticed she was watching me. She smiled and waved. I smiled back and left. We've been

hitting it off since she moved in, although that's a stretch. She speaks very little English. She's cute, though, and very friendly. I knocked on her door to give her my spare room key, and maybe a little more. She seems to be away.

5/06/2016

I guess I misunderstood my neighbor. I thought she was inviting me, but she doesn't answer her door. I caught her on the elevator, but the conversation was incoherent. She was in a hurry, on her way to her ESL class. I finally wrote down, “When will you be home?” She said she didn't know. I knocked on her door one more time last night, but there was still no answer.

Strange experience in the cafeteria this morning. I was waiting at the espresso bar, and a woman was watching me, smiling. I smiled back and said “hi,” but she was silent and continued to smile. I was kind of flattered by it, but I wish I knew who she was and what was on her mind. I should've asked.

5/07/2016

Feeling more lonely than usual tonight. This has been going on for a few nights, actually. Thinking about people like my neighbor or the woman in the cafeteria, what I missed, maybe having their company this evening. But I always miss signals, or read them completely off base. I analyze too much. This sometimes paralyzes me. I lack the ability to do things completely spontaneously. When I do follow my gut, I get in trouble, or at least am disappointed. This goes all the way back to my youth, when I got myself in deep trouble trying to understand what people wanted, but always misreading cues and becoming bitter in the process. I've never overcome this.

5/10/2016

I was out for a smoke this morning, when I exchanged greetings with a woman named Lisa. She's worked next door for many years, but I've just started watching her lately. First time she looked at me she seemed to have a sad look, almost concern or despair. Then we exchanged smiles a couple of times. This morning, she entered the first door into the building and I just assumed she was on her way to work. I finished my smoke a few minutes later. When I went to the door, she was still there. She was rummaging through her bag, trying to find her key, she told me. She'd unlocked the first door, and the second door uses the same lock and key. She was waiting for me. There were no stops on the elevator, so our conversation was brief. I now know her name. I have to see her again. I want to invite her out. I know what time she arrives, and I usually have my first cigarette about then. I'm gonna try to catch her tomorrow.

The other day in the tunnel, a woman waiting for the train began removing her coat as I approached. She expanded her chest as I walked by, as if to display her large breasts. Her eyes were turned away. I swear she was making a pass at me, but why wouldn't she look at me if she were?

When I arrived at the restaurant in Kent, it was very busy and very crowded. Our table was pushed against the next one. A Chinese family arrived, with a very cute young daughter sitting to my left but almost across from me. She kept looking toward me, at least it seemed. We never made direct eye contact. I smiled at her as we left.

I'm personalizing things as I always do, or over-analyzing, but getting good feelings about it. I'm usually scared or angry, feeling bad vibes and avoiding it if I can. Now I want to ride this, see where it takes me. I sense something good happening.

5/11/2016

I'm hysterical this morning. Mixed the music up with a little funk for a change, long wait for my coffee, doing some self-evaluating as I drank. My eyes started to weigh. A lovely young woman sat directly from me. I didn't want to be seen as I was. Eventually we exchanged glances, and I gave her an extremely awkward smile. She gave me a sad look. I finished my coffee quickly.

I stumbled all the way out. Lit my cigarette, and people began to walk by. I started laughing uncontrollably, but thankfully, nobody saw that. At least until I entered the building, and two women who always hang out in the lobby saw me waiting for the elevator. One of them said “look at him.” The ride wasn't fast enough.

Listening to the blues now, and writing this calms me down. I'm a little angry at the woman in the lobby. Her tone was snide, and she spoke loudly. They're both bitchy, but I live with them and always try to be polite. That'll be a little hard now.

5/12/2016

Went out for a walk in the neighborhood with my psych nurse Kiera yesterday. The idea was to practice socializing, overcome fears and get back in the habit of exercising. It was a bad idea. Now people are amused that the woman I can get out with is a lesbian.

5/15/2016

I haven't seen my new neighbor in a week. It's like she's moved out as quietly as she moved in. The last time I saw her was our conversation on the elevator. It isn't bothering me as much as it might, but I have to wonder if it isn't something I did. She's a strange woman. Watching me and smiling, but not saying a word. Just like the woman in the cafeteria. What is it? Are they teasing me? What are they expecting?

I'm leaving the computer lab. I need to change things, and spending time there was a positive step, but I need something more challenging. I don't know if I'll move to a different department or different site. I registered for membership in the Washington Blues Society, and may begin volunteering there. It could be a lot of fun, and music is my first interest now.

5/23/2016

I've been sensing people following me today. One of those days where you keep seeing the same person or persons in the supermarket, seeming to just “be there” everywhere you go. An attractive young woman and a guy with a big dog, blocking the aisle each time. She didn't seem to notice me, or at least didn't turn away from the shelf. It still felt like she was waiting for me to say something.

As I was looking out the window in the coffee shop, I saw a beautiful woman hurry out of a car and in the door. The car left. It came over me that she was there to see me. I wish. Didn't stop thinking this until I had left, exchanging smiles with her on the way out. Now seems very silly. Better these be fantasies, though, rather than fear.

5/27/2016

I keep getting the smiles, but it's deeper than a polite gesture. This morning, a woman on the elevator seemed as if she was happy to see me. I didn't recognize her. I didn't say a thing, just acknowledged the smile. Things like this are happening more and more, and I don't have a clue. Neither what's brought it on, or how to respond. That part's frustrating.

The coughing and hacking are getting bad. It's all day now, sometimes waking me up at night. I used to think I just needed a scare like this to stop smoking. It isn't doing it. I stopped for a day, but had no desire to stay off. I don't have the support I need, someone I can talk to and turn to for consoling, And sex. Cigarettes are a substitute for these, I guess. Smoking helps alleviate the boredom, loneliness and depression.

5/30/2016

I have a neighbor down the hall who is getting on my nerves. He moved to this floor a couple of months ago because he couldn't stand anybody on the 14th floor, or wherever he was before. He took a dislike to me almost as soon as he moved into the building several years ago. It wasn't a big deal, I only saw him for a minute or two on occasion riding the elevator. Now that he's on 17, we're seeing a lot more of each other and it's pushing me to the edge.

He's the kind of guy who would catch me breaking the rules, and report it to the building management. So far, we've been fairly civil to each other. Then tonight, something happened that makes me think this can't go on much longer.

The man next door to me has had a few strokes. He carries a device to signal medics when he needs help, quicker than 911. The thing is, there's no way to locate the device. Tonight, hew was out and the device went off. Medics came to his apartment. When he didn't answer, they broke the door down.

This set off some excitement. The guy down the hall seems to have the idea that somebody on the floor deliberately set off the alarm. Or something to that effect. I didn't notice any of this as it was going on. I didn't even hear the door break over the music. But I stepped out to go downstairs and check on Theresa. As I left, I heard the guy say something about strange people wandering around the floor, “like that guy walking away.” He took my photo. I walked over to find out what was up. A caregiver gave me an explanation, but I didn't really hear what she was saying. I was a little rattled, and my hearing isn't that good right now anyway. And it was hard to hear over him with his voice raised, ranting about whatever or whoever it was at the moment.

I went on my way, and returned when Theresa wasn't didn't answer. A few minutes later I took a cigarette downstairs. The caretaker was leaving at the same time. He had taken pictures of her, too. I'm not going to be very comfortable around this guy. Maybe he'll get tired of us and move again. I don't know where they'd put him. Maybe he can pitch a tent on the roof.

6/08/2016

Dad is still talking about returning to the real estate business. I try to let him down softly and subtly, telling him to get an opinion from his doctor before returning to business. He doesn't even know who his doctor is. I told him Lori may know, but he doesn't know Lori's number. I tried to give it to him over the phone, but he couldn't find a pen. He has no email or cellphone. At one point, we talked about sending the phone number by postal mail! I finally called Lori and asked her to call Dad. Before hanging up on Dad, though, I mentioned to him that situations like this would put him out of business pretty quickly. He said “I know.”

He talks about himself and Barb driving again. His license was revoked a few years ago due to his age and condition, and a hit and run incident. He blames Barb's daughter Cyndy for this, as she reported the accident. I don't know the full story, but he doesn't belong on the road. Barb's left limbs are virtually paralyzed. I pointed out that it takes two arms and two legs to drive a car. He thinks she's very close to recovering from her stroke. She'll never walk again. She'll always be confined to a wheelchair, and having one good arm, will need assistance with that. They can't see this. I want them to have some hope, something to strive for. But it gets frustrating to hear him talk about unrealistic goals. It's like he's living a fantasy.

6/09/2016

Ouch! I've been swearing to myself, I'm going to ask Danielle out this time, but this morning, I had cold feet. She was at the machine with another woman and I stayed back a distance. Then the other woman commented “he's shy.” Danielle said “I know. I don't even bother.”

6/19/2016

It was 8:00 tonight when I realized that except for an early coffee, I hadn't been out at all today. I slept a lot and watched Facebook. I didn't even talk very much to the barista. I was tired, but I shouldn't let the days slip by like that. No exercise, no contact except for a phone call to Dad to wish him a happy Fathers Day. That isn't healthy.

I dropped by Therese’s, but she isn't answering tonight. She rarely does anymore. She blames her health. It's deteriorating, and I feel bad for her. I'm worried for her, and that I'm becoming more like her.

6/26/2016

I went to Capitol Hill this morning. The Pride events are this weekend, and I usually avoid it. It brings back memories of the years in the gayborhood, when I was first diagnosed with schizophrenia. For a couple of years, I didn't know what was going on. Neighbors were trying to shame me for my drinking, and later driving me out of the neighborhood. I began having delusions. I'll never know which if these were real or imagined, but it was terrifying at the time.

When I was a teen, I was sexually assaulted twice. Once by a guy named Ronnie, who was my only friend at the time. The other time, I naively accepted a ride and a drink late at night. I now know that these two were pedophiles, not gay. But it's had an effect on my feelings and views toward homosexuals.

I felt awkward today, but it was only 9 AM and the crowds hadn't arrived yet. I was still glad to leave.

7/23/2016

There was a beautiful young woman at the window in the pharmacy this morning. She was friendly, but when she brought up my account, her face lit up. It went to a different level. I'm imagining things they might have written about me. I chat with the women there, and they're always receptive, but that's part of their job. What could possibly be in their notes?

My niece Nicole is getting married today. I'm very happy for her, but it makes me think of what I've missed, never being in a relationship with any intimacy. I haven't been in any relationship since I was 30. I've isolated since then. The closest thing to any relationship I have is with the baristas at the coffee shop.

Jeff and Joe never married, either. I feel a little guilty for this. I wonder if it's partly my fault, never having set an example. For Joe, I think it's just a decision he's made. He's always been mentally, intellectually, emotionally of sound mind. Jeff, though, has been scared and insecure in adulthood, and I partly blame myself. I was his big brother, but I never led him. I was away during adolescence, struggling with my own problems, and when I returned, there was a bitterness between us. He resented what happened, and I can't blame him.

7/25/2016

I'm feeling scrutinized, but I'm not sure why. Getting signals from people that I can't explain. I was waiting at the bus stop yesterday, sensing eyes turning toward me, making their judgments. A couple of days ago it was the opposite. A woman walking by me looking in all directions but avoiding me. Was she trying to make a point to me? This morning at the coffee shop, I was very self conscious. I got a look from a woman who almost seemed angry. The chatter in line behind me seemed centered on my behavior. I hate days like this.

Nicole's wedding went well, although it was awkward for me. It went as planned, and she has a very good husband. But I did almost no mingling, avoiding it after the first hour. And that led to a struggle, feeling like people were saying “what's wrong with him?”

Traffic on my blog is way down, almost 50%. I'm getting the feeling there are more people reading my personal log than my web log.

Barb's been physically abusing Lori. I found this out from Mom; for some reason, Lori didn't see any need to tell me. It's hard to picture; she is confined to a wheelchair, with one good leg and one good arm. I communicated with Lori by text tonight. She just feels Barb has always been a mean person. I've seen her as a control freak. That isn't always bad, but it can make enemies. We talked about her abusing Dad. He told me about this after she threatened him with a knife. Following this, she began therapy for obsessive compulsive disorder. She had a major stroke a year or two after that. Now she has no control over things in her life.

Barb's anger at Lori is for selling the house. She doesn't think she ever gave Lori permission to do this. She also doesn't realize that it wouldn't be possible for her and Dad to return there. It's a big house, with many stairs that neither of them could handle. She doesn't grasp that she'll always be in a wheelchair, but that's a different matter.

I asked Lori if there was anything I could do to help. I'm on Barb's good side, being the only one that keeps in touch with her and Dad regularly. Lori thinks it will pass. She loves her daughter again, after a few years of animosity. She's probably right, but it will take some time. I don't know that I could be patient.

Smoking is killing me. I'm coughing and hacking a lot, and sometimes getting short-breathed while walking. But I keep doing it. It's a crutch, and on my income, there aren't many replacements.

7/27/2016

I missed an opportunity this morning. A pretty woman watched coming from the register at the coffee shop, giving me a gleaming smile. I smiled back, but didn't say a damn word. It was busy, and the wait was long. I couldn't bring myself to talk to her. I had my eye on the new barista at the same time, not looking at the one giving me the smile. Idiot. I get invitations, but I'm clueless on the first step.

7/28/2016

There's a barista I hadn't really noticed before this morning. Today I happened to look and saw she has a nice pair. I looked at her again and she's a very pretty woman. I can't get my mind off of her today.

8/05/2016

Somebody's screwing with me. For a few days, the battery on my phone was draining rapidly, even when it wasn't in use. I was charging it twice a day. I've only had it since October, but the battery seemed to be dying and can't be replaced. I bought a new phone the other day, and this one has stopped draining on me. Then this morning, I found it on airplane mode. I just can't see how that happened. It takes at least two clicks, and I don't normally go into that part of the settings.

This morning the pillow on my couch was turned around. I feel sure I didn't do this. It's like somebody came in while I was gone. Nothing's missing yet. Usually, things aren't gone when this happens, except a bag of accumulated cigarette lighters one time. Who's doing this? The master key was changed last week after a staff person lost theirs. That pretty much eliminates someone with a stolen key. It almost has to be somebody who works here.

8/10/2016

Great morning. The blog is going off the meter. I've had more visits in the last three days than I've ever had in a month before. I was afraid it was dying. I'll wait and see how long this holds up.

There's a beautiful young woman in the office downstairs, who's been here a few years, and hasn't once turned her head to look at me. I don't know if she's shy or just avoiding me. Until this morning. She started to walk past me again, then suddenly turned to smile and say hello. I reciprocated. I don't know what broke the ice, but it's a great feeling.

Then there was a lady on the elevator I haven't seen before, but gave me a warm smile, and had her eyes on me for the whole ride. I'm not sure if she was gesturing to me, but I could kick myself for not taking my headphones off and chatting. Another missed opportunity.

8/15/2016

A recent discussion on Facebook got me to thinking, what was really the worst job I've ever had? Before I was thirty, I had many menial, soul-sucking, low-paying jobs that some people would say help build character. For me, it was nothing but pain and misery. I didn't stay at any of them for longer than six months. It wasn't planned this way. Either I couldn't stand it anymore, or they couldn't stand me.

I obtained my GED right after my 17th birthday, and within a month landed a job on a seafood processor in the Aleutian Islands. I didn't know what I was in for, but at $3.50 plus commission, it didn't pay bad at the time. I thought it would be an adventure, and in a way, it was.

I was antisocial and maybe in the early stages of schizophrenia. Not good for working and living on a crowded ship for three months. I made enemies quickly. I was so hated, one night, we were loading pallets from storage onto a freighter. The guy operating their crane was new. I was stacking boxes on the elevator. The guy across from me, Rick, warned me that I might want to move. Looking up, a load of pallets was hanging over the edge of the shaft. I flew out of there. They came crashing down within seconds. Everybody laughed. Rick tried to sound angry as he went upstairs, but he couldn't keep a straight face. I was almost killed, and they thought it was funny.

There were no women on the ship, except for one in the kitchen. It had been coed before, but this had led to problems. Ironically, the women were coming back the next season. This might have been just as well. I was intensely shy, and don't know what my reaction would have been.

Shifts were typically 12 hours. I was a packer. I cleaned the gills off of crabs and loaded them into steel cases. They were frozen after that. I spoke to nobody as I worked. The long shifts weren't that bad, because there wasn't really anything else to do. I played a lot of dominoes. I always got my butt kicked there. I had quit smoking just before starting this job, but I was back to it. We rarely went to shore, but there wasn't anything there, anyway. When it was finally over, a guy named Huey told me he could get me a job on a fishing boat. My eyes popped open for a second, out of disbelief. Then I said “hell, no!”

After my first college stint, I had no degree, I was drinking heavily, and I was at rock-bottom. I spent a lot of time there. I took a job in Renton at a brake refurbishing shop. My duty was removing the pistons and cleaning them. I was soaked in brake fluid every day. Some of those pistons were rusted on. I pounded them in anger, the only thing that gave me energy.

I washed dishes at the Convention Center for a time. This was on-call, and minimum wage, so it didn't pay the bills. But it was all I could get at the time. We would clean up after hundreds, thousands of people in a short time. It usually went ten hours, but I recall one occasion that we worked overnight. It was set up like an assembly line, with long lines of carts at the door. I usually scraped the dishes and rinsed them as they came in. It doesn't sound that bad now, but it was hot, I was sweating from alcohol, and drenched in dirty dish water. Ten hours of that was more than anybody could take.

There were the days at the labor pool, with low pay and doing work the customers couldn't or wouldn't do for themselves, or even have their own staff do. It was a rip-off, flat out exploitation. The staff at the pool said the wage was set by the work and the customer's bid. That wasn't true. Every job paid the same wage, I think it was $4.50 at the time. I kept going back there off and on for two years. I later went to a second one down the street from me, eventually ending up at the Convention Center.

8/28/2016

I've made a couple of attempts to give up smoking. I need to do this for health and money reasons. Money is a big problem. I get $754 a month from Social Security, and that isn't enough to get by. I'm borrowing heavily. My health is a problem, too. I'm coughing and hacking, sometimes short breathed when walking, but stress is a factor there, too. When it's quiet, early in the day, I'm relaxed and breath easy. But the crowds form later, in front of the building and down on the corner. I have to walk around them. It's just one block, and I don't walk faster than I usually do, not that I can tell. There are no incidents. But in the back of my mind, something isn't right. There's something in my sub-conscience that's making me react physically, almost gasping for air by the time I reach the coffee shop. It doesn't happen when I go out the back way to the bar on Madison. But smoking is a big factor, and my throat is getting dirty as well. I'm hacking up flang when I lay down at night.

9/01/2016

I'm under another attack on my computer. This time, there was something coming in every time I was on Facebook, using the maximum bandwidth. Stopped as soon as I left FB. It was strange, but at first I assumed it was coming from the FB server. I let it go for several days. It bothered me though, and I finally ran WireShark to see if I could find exactly where this was coming from. As soon as I launch WireShark, it stops. Now this morning, something was probing my other computer, and that's shut off. I'm disconnected right now, and need to develop a strategy for this. That may be to simply stay offline for a while.

Office documents are very slow right now. It's taking five to ten seconds to open them, that's not normal. I'll see if things are better on a live device. I've been

putting off testing it anyway. Might do a clean install. Doing this offline is problematic, but might be necessary.

9/02/2016

My neighbors seem to think I'm some kind of tech guru. I'm the first one they go to when they have problems with their devices. I'm years behind on technology, know nothing about the current Windows, and even struggle to keep my system safe and secure. About all I do is check to be sure everything's plugged in and try a reboot. Sometimes this works. The guy next door to me has a computer that's completely inoperable. He keeps asking me to help. I've suggested to him getting a new one. He can't do that, and he's desperate to get it running. I feel bad, but I keep telling him there's nothing I can do.

9/10/2016

I spoke to the food delivery woman briefly yesterday. She brings meals to people who otherwise can't shop for themselves. I've had my eye on her for a while, but I was dull and awkward, and she showed no interest. I walked away with a stupid “happy Friday,” and couldn't leave fast enough.

Dad might be coming to terms with his memory. He no longer talks about returning to real estate, and the other day, he told me “I'm 99 years old. I can't remember everything.” Sounds like a concession to me.

He and Barb are in a bad situation right now. The owner of the care center is trying to squeeze money out of them in order to expand. He wants $150K. He's fired staff at the same time, and when I spoke to Dad on Sunday, there was one person on duty instead of two. Carmin is looking for a place to move them, but it's not easy. Barb's condition limits the options. A guy named Charles, I think, owes them thousands of dollars, but has always been far behind on payments. He hasn't sent a check in over three months now. Lori says he owes them $300K. They need this money. Their funds are starting to run low, and they need full-time care, the best they can get. The option Lori's talking about is foreclosing on the property they sold Charles. I don't have a clue how this business works, and will leave it to her and Carmin to iron out.

I got a letter today, a claim form. I may have run into a nice windfall from my days at the college. While I was there, I was usually scheduled for 17 hours a week, but often worked over this. From all the hours I put in over twenty, I was due medical benefits, but like many other part-timers, this was never implemented. A class action suit was filed a few years ago, and has finally been settled. I'll have to be careful with this: The letter looks official, but the information they're asking for makes me a little nervous (name, address, SSN). I can see why they'd require this, but I'll have to double-check anyway.

9/11/2016

Dad has it in his mind that Jim's in town and he's going to visit him this week. He seems very sure and has a lot of detail: Jim's gay, lives in Bremerton with his partner and sells real estate. He tells me that Cyndy and Jeff Bell passed this information on to him, and they will be driving him to meet Jim. Cyndy knows nothing about this. Dad feels sure, though. I worry that he's being delusional, and is in for a big disappointment. I need to talk to him and let him down lightly, but that won't be easy. What the hell do I say? Anything's gonna hurt.

9/14/2016

Wednesday passed, and Dad didn't see Jim. Now he believes he'll see him at a ball game on Friday. He calls him “Jimmy,” something he hasn't been called since he was 10. Dad still sounds sure about it. He tells me it's a feeling he has. I didn't tell him Jim wouldn't be there. That would just hurt, and at this point, I don't think it would deter him. He feels very sure about this. I wish I knew what led to this. Is he depressed? He's been telling me he and Barb have been forgetting to exercise. He's stopped talking about returning to real estate. And lately, he hasn't brought up Barb walking again. There was never a realistic chance of this, but it gave them both drive and hope. Are they giving up?

9/17/2016

I always have the feeling that people are watching me. Even alone in my apartment, I sense that neighbors are listening in. I sometimes look out the peep hole to see if anybody is near my door. There are cameras around the building, and they are broadcast on residents' televisions. A neighbor of mine once mentioned that she was watching the camera channel and noticed how often I was going out to smoke. She's a nice woman, and means no harm, but it's creepy knowing people have nothing better to do than to watch and keep track of who goes in and out of the building.

There are two women who spend their entire day in the lobby, watching people come in and out the door or the elevator. I don't know what they talk about, but it's discomforting. Once, I came in the building on an emotional whirl. I needed to get home and calm down. As I waited for the elevator, I heard one of them say “look at him!” Thanks, bitch. You have a nice day, too.

It's the same when I go out. I'll hear comments from time to time, reinforcing my fears. It holds me back from doing more. I get into a routine, find a place that I feel comfortable, and keep going back there. It's a simple routine, I become friendly with the people there, but don't take it beyond a simple chat. A lot of people find themselves in a rut. Breaking out of it isn't so easy.

My last year at the college was hell. For ten years, the department head left all daily responsibilities to her supervisors. She was seldom seen where I was, the computer lab. Once, as she was walking by, she noticed that somebody was eating and drinking in the lab, which violated the rules. Instead of walking inside

to talk to us, she called on her phone to let us know. She stood there to tell us where this person was, and said to check all stations. She hung up and went on to wherever she was going. That's about all I ever saw of her at work, except occasionally going to the office. Generally, I was comfortable with this.

Then she left for another job. Her replacement was hands-on, a micro manager. I was at the help desk at the time, and he set new rules for call waiting, call time; calls were always logged, but he added software to keep a record of everything. He was there at least once a shift, usually more. He'd literally look over my shoulder. My days were numbered form the minute he arrived, and I lasted about a year. I didn't even appeal my dismissal.

9/18/2016

Dad and Barb have been moved to a new care facility tonight. Lori did all of the work, and they're angry at her right now. Barb was angry at her already, and had started kicking her again. Lori called me for an update, and she broke down. I feel like I should be doing more. Lori is carrying a heavy burden in this. I don't know what to do. Calling them a couple of times a week does a lot; Barb keeps telling me I'm her favorite son just because I keep in touch. For a while, I was visiting them once a month or so, having dinner with them. I stopped doing that when they didn't come one time. Now they're in Tacoma, and not having a car, it's difficult to get there. There's a one hour train ride one way, but the return trip would go late into the night.

I don't have a clue on the business side. Carmin is paid to handle this, and Lori does a lot of the leg work. Joe handles the estate. Jeff seems to stay out altogether, having no contact with them. He has his own problems.

While we were talking, Mike Goman popped into the conversation. When I was 16, we were arguing about a bottle of whiskey. I broke the bottle over his head. I've always felt terrible about that. Lori tells me he's facing life in prison as a result of three strikes. I've hated that law from the start, and he doesn't deserve it. He should have a chance. And it could well have happened to me. My offenses were just under what might have given me serious time. Then I isolated, and mellowed out with therapy and quitting alcohol. After 30, my only confrontations with the police were over jaywalking. It sounds like Mike could have used this.

9/20/2016

Dad's approaching the late stages of Alzheimer’s. Lately he's had trouble standing up, and keeping his balance while walking. He's being examined in the hospital and might be there for five days. Barb's hysterical. I don't think she understands what's going on, but she just wants to be with him. Dad was very calm when I talked to him tonight, almost jovial. The problem, as he told me, was that he was having difficulty with bowels.

Nicole posted a message on Facebook tonight saying she doesn't want to grow old. I've had the same thought many times. As much as I've struggled in my life, I've gotten through it. As I see some people struggle with old age, I just don't know if I could put up a fight. I know people who've lived healthy and vibrant in their later years, but I fear I'm more likely to face the kinds of issues Dad has. I don't want to die young, but old age wouldn't be a lot better.

9/22/2016

Now Mom's in the hospital. She wasn't feeling well, and went to the ER. Her blood pressure was high, and they're running some tests. I feel partly responsible for this; I asked her for some money to get through the month, and as usual, she obliged. But she wasn't as good-humored about it this time. I'm putting a pretty heavy burden on her right now, and hopefully this settlement will put that to ease.

9/24/2016

I accidentally doubled my medication this morning. I've done this before, and it's insane. I'm dizzy and on an emotional whirl, panicky and disoriented. It's difficult to focus and I struggle to write this. I started feeling aroused watching the barista at he coffee shop and needed to get out quickly before embarrassing myself.

After relieving myself, I sat down at my computer to check Facebook and the news, but couldn't read anything. Then then the settlement popped into my head. Is it a fraud after all? Very elaborate if it is. How was King County involved? The lawsuit involved state employees. I've received letters previously, and I worked longer hours than I was supposed to, so the benefits probably did kick in at some point. The claim form even had a bar code. But the woman at the law firm answered “law firm,” nothing else, not even the name. bs-s.com. BS? Strange. They have my SSN. Am I screwed?

I'm a little embarrassed tonight, but I may have embarrassed someone else even more. I made a request for a singer/songwriter named Courtney Weaver on a blues radio program, and requests are made on Facebook. Courtney is an activist in domestic and gun violence, and tomorrow will sing at Columbia City Theater in connection with Concert Across America to End Gun Violence. It's a good cause, and this seemed like a good way to promote it. Courtney isn't a great singer, but I thought it was important to get her name and the event out there. I linked it to a playlist on YouTube.

The post was ignored. DJ John Kessler didn't respond, nor did any other listeners. I didn't expect this, and I'm hoping that Courtney doesn't notice. I don't know her personally, just through FB, and she could be hurt to see this. I didn't help her at all. She's a strong woman, though, having been though a lot, and may just shrug it off.

I thought I was sticking my neck out there, but it may have been at somebody else's expense.

9/25/2016

I was just laying on the couch and suddenly had a fantasy about being naked, on a leash, crawling on the sidewalk, led by a beautiful woman. I occasionally licked her bare leg. Kinky.

The family is really being tested right now. Dad and Barb are entering the late phases of dementia, and in combination with the events of the last week, their behavior has really been bizarre. They're both spitting on the workers at the care facility, spewing racist comments. It won't be long before they're moved to a nursing home, and Lori is talking about their separation. They've been together over 30 years, and while it wasn't a happy marriage towards the end, I don't know what a break-up would do to them. But Dad sounded better than he has in years at the hospital, and it could well be relief from the burden that Barb makes him carry.

I visited Mom yesterday. All of us go to her for help, and that might be wearing her. She had a TIA, a “mini-stroke.” Lori pours out to her, Jeff's life is in shambles, and I always need money. Mom has other health problems, with diabetes and arthritis, limiting her activities. I urge her to get a walker, but she won't have it. Right now, she's driving her car to get her mail across the street.

Mom told me Lori is having marriage problems. She's been there before, but now that the kids are gone, this might be the end. Gary never cared for me, so it wouldn't be any loss as far as I'm concerned. I don't know how it will be for Lori.

Lori's also carrying a disproportionate burden in Dad and Barb's situation. I asked her this morning if there was more I could do to help, but she said not right now. All this, in combination with the real estate business, and she's really going through a lot right now.

9/26/2016

There are 300 units where I live, and many people don't stay long. When people leave, it's usually uneventful, and I don't notice they're absence immediately. Actually, it's months or longer before I start to miss them and wonder what's happened to them. I really only get to know the long-timers well, but even when they leave, it takes a little while to feel the void.

One such person was Sandy. We'd both lived here for over twenty years, and our friendship went back to the early days in group therapy. She had just left an abusive relationship. The guy was trying to bring her back, saying that he had “changed.” She was seriously considering his offer. The rest of us urged her not to do this. It would be no different, abusers don't change their ways. Eventually, he would go back to the same old thing. She decided against it.

We became good friends. I think she had a crush on me, but I didn't feel the same for her. But we had a good relationship. We'd chat on the bus or elevator and offer support to one another when we needed it. We saw a lot of each other, daily it seemed. Riding the elevator or passing each other on the street, or in the store. I almost expected to see her when I went out.
Today, I saw her sister on the elevator. It occurred to me I hadn't seen Sandy in a little while, and I asked what she was up to. She had died back in June, nearly four months ago. She choked on some food at a restaurant. Four months, and I hadn't noticed. I don't listen to the gossip here, so a lot of things fly under my radar, and many people leave here discreetly. But something's wrong when someone like Sandy is gone, and I don't miss her. I hadn't even thought of her until I saw her sister.

9/29/2016

I archived my coding projects this week. They were far out of date, and I don't remember the last time I updated them. At some point, I lost interest. I have a degree that's worthless: 13 years old and no experience, other than helping CS students debug their apps in the computer lab. Once I taught them to debug for themselves, they didn't come back. I'm far behind on technology now, and if I were to retrain now, it would be from the bottom up. I don't know what I'd do if I were to return to work now. Hopefully, it wouldn't be anything like I was doing in the 80s, when drinking and mental illness held me back from anything but grueling, repetitive, minimum wage jobs. But not having worked in nearly four years, I wouldn't be in a position to be selective.

I seem to be getting angry looks from people. Not sure what's going on. I can't think of anything I've done recently that would trigger this. Maybe it's been happening for a while, and I'm just now taking notice.

10/9/2016

The buzz about Trump's “pussy” comment has me thinking about my own past experience. I've groped a woman at least one time, and I've been on the receiving end more than once. The former happened when I was washing dishes at the convention center. There was an obese black woman, not very pretty or appealing, but funny and a pleasure to work with. I was bringing the dishes in from the floor one night. I saw her bending over, with her huge ass displayed. Something came over me and I grabbed it. I immediately jumped back, overcome with shame and embarrassment. She turned and laughed. From that point on, I avoided her and hated myself when I was around her. She didn't seem to hold anything against me. She was still friendly, maybe more than before.

A couple of years before that, I was walking home on Rainier Avenue one night, when a black woman stepped out of a parking lot and grabbed my crotch. She asked me if I wanted to get laid. I was aroused and embarrassed at the same

time, and said in an awkward tone “not tonight.” I went on, wondering what had just happened. If she was a prostitute, I couldn't have paid her. I wasn't getting much sex at the time, either, and people were aware of that. I thought maybe she was just offering to help me break my rut. I started regretting turning her down as I reached home.

One night, at age 15 or so, I was out after 2AM, and didn't know how I was going to get home. The regular bus service was over for the night, and I didn't know about the night owl. I stood alone at the stop, worried and feeling lonely. A man pulled up in his car, asking if I needed a ride. I couldn't turn him down. We talked, and he persuaded me to go to his place. I thought he seemed cool, and I was very naive and desperate to make friends at the time. I took his offer. We had a couple of drinks at his bar, when he grabbed my thigh and made a sexual comment. I jumped off of my stool, and said hell no. He apologized. He offered to let me sleep in his guest bed. I accepted this, and slept most the night with one eye open. I kept wondering the next day if I had been somehow compromised as I slept.

10/11/2016

I haven't had an erection in a while, at least in a couple of months. I even tried some of the porn that usually stimulates me last night. Maybe there's no reason to worry. I just need to find a soulmate to take me out of my long rut. But I turned 55 last week, and I'm at that age. I know there's medication for it, but losing it is still a terrible feeling. And talking to my doctor, a woman, would be a very awkward situation. Why do I need meds for everything?

10/12/2016

Sometimes writing is like talking to a doctor about a pain or ailment. The problem quickly goes away, with a kind of placebo effect. Now I've gotta use it.

10/17/2016

Dad and Barb are declining quickly. They recently didn't recognize Lori, who sees them quite often. I couldn't carry a conversation on the phone with Barb yesterday; she just couldn't hear me. This is happening more and more often. It could be hearing problems, but there's been no mention of that, and I think she's just struggling to use the phone. I'll ask if she's had her ears checked.

Dad and I didn't talk much, but he mentioned a “surprise” for me this week. I can't guess what he had in mind, and I'm sure he'll have no guess either when I call him Wednesday. He's also looking for a church. He's a member of the Unitarian denomination, and returned to religion after turning 60 or so, becoming concerned of what an afterlife might bring. It's their favorite part of the week. I told him I'll find a church near them. I've been an atheist all of my life, and have never seriously pondered that question. I was told as a child that I

would go to Christian Hell. I guess I took the same turn at the crossroads that Robert Johnson did.

10/18/2016

I had a panic attack last night. I was extremely restless. It wasn't restless leg syndrome, my whole body was under attack. I couldn't swallow without sitting up. This made it worse. I have post nasal drip, and need to swallow frequently. I got up and went to the computer a couple of times, but there wasn't much to do there at 1:00AM, so I had a smoke and tried going back to bed. My Mother recommended Melatonin to me once. I tried it, but it didn't work very quickly.

I had dry mouth this morning. The combination might seem to be related to drinking a lot of coffee, but I didn't have as much as usual yesterday. If it happens again, I'll have to walk in to the urgent care clinic.

Lori tells me there's nothing wrong with Barb's hearing, she just can't process the information. What goes into her ear isn't being processed by her brain. She isn't deaf, but there's no connection. She's coherent in person, although you have to repeat often. It must be very frustrating.

Jeff is almost hopeless. He asks me for suggestions, but he never follows through on what I tell him. It's been three years since he's had a job. I've had wide gaps: In my drinking days, I often went six to twelve months between jobs. It's something much deeper for him. He's been in denial about Dad's condition, and Dad's declined quite a bit in these three years. When I told him what Dad was saying about Jim coming back to town, he responded “sounds reasonable to me.” He didn't see anything wrong with the situation. He doesn't talk to Dad. I wonder if he's trying to keep a mental picture of the way Dad used to be, and avoids seeing him any other way. He knows inside that Dad's not the same, but wants to live in a different time.

Jeff's never had very high self-esteem, and I'm partly to blame for this. I want to help him badly now, but he doesn't want to be helped. He also limits his prospects. He won't take a job that requires commuting, eliminating probably 90% of job prospects. He won't take a temp job. I suggested Worksource to him over a year ago. I asked him tonight if he'd ever done this; he said he went today for the first time. I think he just wanted me to leave him alone.

He got a new phone several months ago. There's an ongoing problem in his contacts. He transferred them manually, I guess, and he switched Lori's phone number with mine. So since then, he's been calling and texting me, intending to reach Lori. Fixing this would be a simple task, but he just doesn't do it. I can't figure out what holds him back.

10/19/2016

Dad's now having delusions about people spying on him. He was ready to call the police yesterday. I can sympathize. I've had experiences with people following me and watching me at home. I had no privacy. It was most intense while living on Capitol Hill, where buildings were only separated by a few feet and neighbors wanted to force me out. They did. I couldn't handle it financially, anyway. The place I ended up was a godsend. With the privacy and the location, as well as the price, I don't plan to go anywhere else soon.

10/21/2016

The elevators here are scheduled to be replaced soon. There's no timeline, but there's a similar project at another subsidized housing project, and the first car took the entire Summer. With one elevator for 17 floors, the trip can easily take five minutes each way. Multiply this by 20 cigarettes a day, and I'll be losing a big chunk of my life to this. I dread thinking about it.

I've been having flashbacks about 7th grade, about the time things turned for the worse. I abandoned sports, because I was never very good, and academics, because I didn't care. Junior high was a disaster for me socially. I was already on the loser list, but this put it on the next level. Dave Hirinaka ripping a patch of hair off of my head in front of hundreds of people was a low point I'll never forget. I didn't return to public school after one quarter at junior high.

10/22/2016

What a lousy morning. I have a nasty cough that kept me awake all night. Walking five blocks to Coffee Tree in baggy pants, my underwear was slipping and I realized the zipper was open. My long shirt may have hidden it. I caught before going inside, and I only passed a couple of people, but I got a smirk about halfway.

The ongoing soap opera in my family has me bonding closer than ever before. Lori and I are chatting a lot, both concerned about Dad's state of mind. Calling him at the care center is more than a ritual; I want to be there for him, and if I can't be there in person, talking to him on the phone is close enough. I can do it more often, twice a week. It's important to him. He and Barb tell everybody how much they appreciate the calls. The conversation is repetitious and not very productive, but I do get insight into what he's going through at this point in his life.

I emailed Jeff last night, offering to to meet up with him to talk about his ongoing problems. I avoided offering to give advice, but to listen to anything he has to say and needs to get out. We have problems communicating, so I generally have avoided this, but I don't know if he has anybody right now. I suspect he's isolating like I do. Maybe it's time for us to come together. We've never been close, but he needs somebody and I want to be there for him this time.

10/23/2016

The coughing is just a nasty cold, or so they told at the triage last night. But they also found I have emphysema. Reading about it on the Mayo Clinic website, this is irreversible. Treatment can only slow the progression. I may end up on an oxygen tank. And yet I'm debating buying one last pack of cigarettes at the gas station. I have a feeling I will.

10/24/2016

My stuffy nose and congested chest have me mouth-breathing this morning. The coughing isn't as frequent, but my muscles are sore and it's really painful when I do.

I'm on my last pack of smokes. I skipped a couple, one before my cappuccino when I get up in the morning, and one after having a coffee at the Diva. It's a set routine, but maybe it won't be hard to change.

There's a new woman in the office downstairs. I've seen her twice. First time as I got off the elevator she gave me a fond hello. She looked like she knew me, and she was pleased to see me. We chatted briefly on the elevator this morning, but it was very short as she got off on the sixth floor. I know I tend to make too much of these things: A smile is probably just a smile. But I need to find out who she is.

10/26/2016

I'm not doing very well phasing out cigarettes. I've smoked a pack since yesterday. I made a call to my doctor, we can talk about this as well as other long-term remedies.

Jeff never sent me a reply. Knowing him, he probably resented my suggesting he needs help. He could still send a “no thanks,” but that's his call. I've done what I can for now.

10/27/2016

Recent chats with Dad have been disheartening. He continues to say something's not right about the place, but can't tell me what it is. He says he's not sure. I listen to him and ask questions, and nothing he says would indicate anything is wrong with the care center. Something is bothering him, though.

He no longer mentions Barb getting back on her feet again. He used to tell me, every time I spoke to him, that she was making great progress, and would be walking again very soon. Unrealistic as this is, it gave them both some hope and something to drive for. We didn't discourage them from believing it. This is no longer on his mind or hers. They seem to have come to the realization that it won't happen, as Barb's condition continues to decline, and they've gone from hope to fear.

Until recently, he had hopes of living in a normal home. Not long ago, he was still talking about returning to work. His attitude has changed a lot. It would be the same for anybody who had their hopes dashed like his were, to spend his final years in a place that he had no part in choosing. I hope he can come to terms with it soon.

10/29/2016

It's been a week now, and I'm still smoking, and it will probably be a while before I stop. I've eliminated some habits, and I'm smoking less. That's a start. Some major changes will have to happen in my life before I give it up. Getting out more would be a start. Free things, like going to the park, tend to bore me, while the fun stuff costs more than I have in my budget. The award from the class action suit will change that, but SSDI will stop, and that's my only income, so I can't rely on this long-term. I won't be able to go out every night.

It would also help to have someone else in my life, for support and to share my thoughts and feelings with. The closest I have to this right now is Theresa, but she isn't the kind of person I'd want as a soulmate. She isn't a pretty woman, anyway, and we tend to talk about her problems, little about my life.

I have an urge to light a cigarette as I write this. I guess that's one more habit I have to break.

11/03/2016

The tissue box was moved. I laid a towel next to it the other day. I'm sure I put the towel behind of the box. Today it's in front. How were they switched?

I spoke to Lori this morning, and Dad might be worse than I suspected. He's having childish outbursts, yelling and throwing things at people. He's in a wheelchair now, unable to keep his balance. His organs are starting to fail. Lori's talking about his funeral! Not that his death is imminent, but she feels there should be something in place now. I usually call him on Wednesday, but the time passed quickly last night and I didn't get around to it. I'll call him in a few minutes.

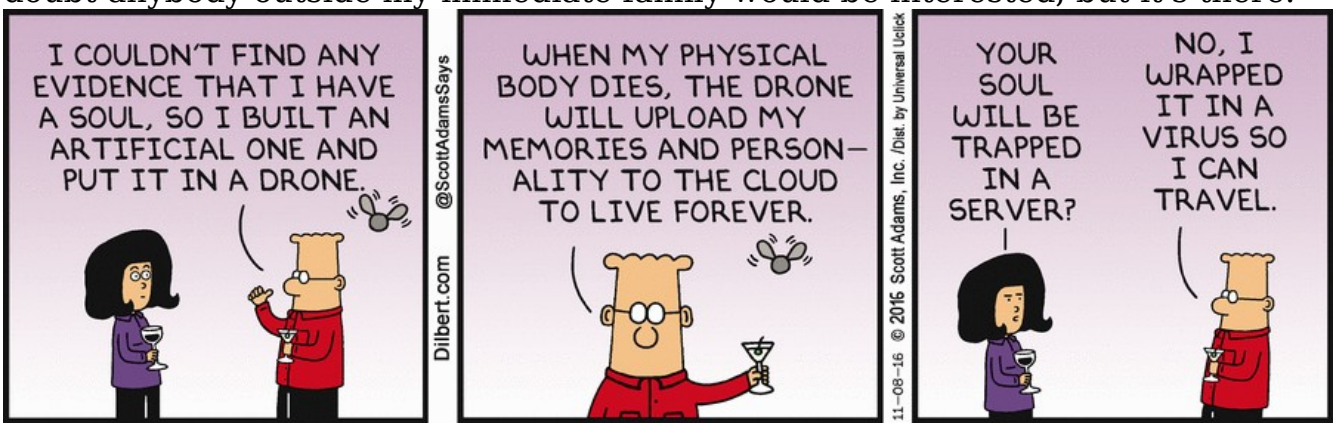
I learned for the first time that Carmin, who has been the main overseer of Jack and Barb, and has their power of attorney, is actually just a bookkeeper. She's done a good job, but I'm not sure how we trusted her with so much responsibility. I never questioned it. She seems to know exactly what she's doing. But the subject of pay came up. None of us know how much she is making for doing this. It all comes from Jack and Barb's holdings. Jeff and Cyndy are going to get more involved on the business end. That should be a positive move.

The cold is nearly gone. What I have now is a “smoker's cold.” Hacking persists, as does a stuffy nose, but these are symptoms of smoking, too.

I talked to Dad after dinner. He was asleep when I called this afternoon, apparently not sleeping at night. It was a strange conversation. He sounded drowsy, and about all he had to say was what a good place the care center is. It was like somebody was telling him what to say. It was hard to get any conversation started, he wouldn't say much else. I mentioned the World Series, but he hadn't paid any attention to that. It was the same thing, over and over, “this is a good place, the people are good here.” Like someone was coaching him to say that.

11/08/2016

I'm joking about death today. First about going out in the Big One (earthquake), then a Dilbert cartoon, where he doesn't believe in a human soul and is leaving his life on the cloud for immortality. I have dreams about the quake; they're scary but peaceful. I have to go out some way, and that might as well be it. My plan is actually similar to Dilbert's; this log, and other personal files, are on Google Drive, encrypted but just needing a couple of passwords. Before I go, I need to figure out a way to pass these on to Joe. It wouldn't be too complicated for him. I doubt anybody outside my immediate family would be interested, but it's there.


I COULDN'T FIND ANY EVIDENCE THAT I HAVE A SOUL, SO I BUILT AN ARTIFICIAL ONE AND PUT IT IN A DRONE.
@ScottAdamsSays
Dilbert.com
WHEN MY PHYSICAL BODY DIES, THE DRONE WILL UPLOAD MY MEMORIES AND PERSONALITY TO THE CLOUD TO LIVE FOREVER.
11-08-16 © 2016 Scott Adams, Inc. /Dist. by Universal Uclick
YOUR SOUL WILL BE TRAPPED IN A SERVER?
NO, I WRAPPED IT IN A VIRUS SO I CAN TRAVEL.

11/10/2016

I've been avoiding attending meetings for PAB at the mental health center. My nurse/counselor is urging me to go, but It's hard to get motivated for it. It's a planning committee for activities at the center; I doubt I'd join any of those. But the idea is to do some social mingling, and the committee is a place for this. I was debating going there, or talking to Leslie at the Coffee Tree. I chose the latter, but it turned out she wasn't there. I always just miss her. It was too late to change plans.

The elections are going to have wide effects, devastating for some. For me personally, cuts to Social Security will be on the table. I can't live on what little I'm drawing now, and further reductions would put me in a deep hole. It could be worse. The hatred that's been normalized now will probably not affect me directly. But I have many Muslim friends and neighbors who I worry about.

11/13/2016

My blog is corrupted. A plugin install hung for several minutes, and now I can't get into the admin page. The content looks OK. I really hate to think about losing it. That's five years of work. I've backed it up, but it looks like that archive isn't complete. Something in the settings is still not right.

11/17/2016

I feel pretty good. I saw Dr. Rhoads this morning, and she's more optimistic about my lungs. I'll be doing some breathing tests in the next few weeks. I have to give up cigarettes, no way around that. I'm making a little progress, dropping the one when I get up in the morning, or after a coffee. The hardest is in the evening, when I'm home alone, with little to do. The impulse is very strong then.

I finally got to talk to Leslie for a few minutes yesterday. She had been working three jobs, but is back to one for now. She's an actress, and will soon be doing a tour in *Romeo & Juliet.* She's playing the lead role. I asked her for dates and times. She said she'd get back to me.

Dad seems to be sleeping a lot these days. Or at least not on a normal schedule. He sometimes stays awake at night, then sleeps through the afternoon. I guess this isn't unusual for his age, but it's hard to get him on the phone right now. 4:00 PM, he's sleeping. 5:00, dinnertime. 7:00, sleeping again. There isn't a good time to call anymore.

11/21/2016

When I first had my own computer, I was eager to take it apart and get inside. Upgrading parts was a breeze. This continued through several desktops, and there was never an issue; I never broke anything, and it would be running better than before when I was done.

At some point, this changed. Now I dread taking it apart, worrying about something going wrong. And things do go wrong. Last year, I installed a solid state drive, but it just didn't work. I gave up on it, but left it there. When I installed it, I unplugged the DVD drive because there were no other extensions available. This weekend, I re-connected the DVD drive, but inadvertently disconnected the hard drive in doing so. I spent a couple of days on my secondary machine before correcting it.

Maybe years of hearing other peoples' problems wore on me. Somewhere along the way I lost confidence and my skills eroded along with it. It wasn't anything I did, or any major mishap. I worry more now.

11/24/2016

Thanksgiving evening and I've spent the day alone. Heading out to Cyndy's tomorrow, where I'll see Dad for the first time at least since July. I don't know if

they'll recognize me. They sometimes have trouble identifying Lori, and she visits them frequently, at least once or twice a week. It's sad to think, but it's just the terms we face now. I read this week that dementia is on the decline. Not much of a consolation given Dad and Barb's situation.

I was a little nervous tonight. I started hearing system sounds on my computer, just randomly it seemed. I didn't know what was going on. It seemed to stop when I changed radio stations, but I had thoughts of somebody intruding on my system. Hope it's over.

11/25/2016

Dad and Barb were happy to get out today, though they didn't quite seem to be aware of where they were or who anybody was. They had to ask me my name. We had a good chat, and they were enjoying themselves. Barb had a caretaker to feed her. I noticed Dad didn't eat his turkey. I suspect cutting it was a challenge for him, and he didn't want to ask for help. I wish I'd offered now.

Cyndy and Jeff have a beautiful condo on the waterfront. I joked that their kitchen is as large as my apartment, although that wasn't quite true.

We're all very worried about Jeff. Joe and I met him in Kent for a ride. Jeff insisted that Lori was coming as well. That didn't make sense; she's in Puyallup, and has a car. What likely happened is he mistook me to be Lori when the three of us were texting to make arrangements. He still hasn't corrected his address book, and calls me to talk to Lori, and apparently his phone identifies me as her as well. He just won't do this simple task. Joe and I have given him leads to jobs, but he doesn't follow through. I've urged him to get food stamps while he's going through this, told him where to go and what the procedure is. Last time he said he would. I doubt he has. Joe and I chatted, and he said he was going to talk to Jeff to persuade to to see a doctor to get analyzed. He has a disability, but either doesn't realize it or won't admit it. He's got to get help that we can't give him.

11/28/2016

The left side of my face is tense and kind of heavy. It's felt that way for quite a while now, but I never think to talk to my doctor about it. First thing that comes to mind is anxiety. Then there are side effects from medications. Or too much caffeine. There's no pain, just tension. I used to get cluster headaches, but those stopped several years ago, and were on the right side. It makes it very hard to show a natural smile. One side of my lips turns turns upward, but the left side is pulled down. It's very awkward. Need to bring this up with Dr. Rhoads next time I see her.

Conversations with Dad are getting more and more fruitless. He has very little to say anymore, and I have a hard time initiating the conversation. I'll bring up football. He doesn't care much about this anymore. He and Barb used to attend every Husky home game. They did this for 20-30 years. Now I update him on the

Dawgs' run for the championship, and get nothing more than an “oh, great.” I'll ask what he's done that day, and he can't remember, or hasn't really done anything at all. Hearing from me means a lot to him, but the conversations are getting shorter and frustrating for me.

11/30/2016

Just got kind of rude treatment from the baristas at Diva. They intentionally held up my coffee, as if to test my patience. I’m trying to make something positive out of it. Maybe they were trying to invite me to chat for a minute. I’ve wanted to do this for a while, but if they were giving me the opportunity, I let it pass. I just tried to be patient, and not be upset.

I upgraded my operating system yesterday. openSUSE is the most flexible and configurable installation there is. I’ve been using it for about ten years now. Other Linux distros give you little control of the configuration on installation. It also has the best tools and extensive documentation. I’m not very active in the oS community anymore, though. I got chased out of the forums, haven’t filed a bug report in a while, and the mailing list is kind of disparaging. I used to maintain software on the repositories, but fell way behind and just lost enthusiasm. Community is one of the main advantages of Linux; as in so many other things, I’ve withdrawn and no longer participate with others.

12/01/2016

Somebody burned their food again tonight. As is custom, they opened their door to vent, and triggered the system alarm. This shuts down the elevators, and starts a loud robot voice telling us to immediately leave our apartments and walk downstairs. This continues until the fire department arrives and turns off the alarm. This time, though, we had a neighbor, half panicked, yelling and pounding on peoples’ doors. I stepped out for a minute. It smelled like a burnt steak. He wouldn’t stop. He was running up and down the hall, pounding as loud as he could, trying to take charge. WTF was he going to do? Call 911? The FD is already on its way. It was half funny, but by the time I went back to my apartment, I was just annoyed. Maybe he was trying to do good, but he was just acting like an ass.

12/03/2016

I’m anticipating getting a check in the mail, but having thoughts of the problems it could bring. If I just went ahead and deposited in my bank account, I would have no source of income and my costs would skyrocket. Being on disability, I can only have up to $2K in the bank. The SSDI check would be gone. Rent would rise; I don’t know how they calculate holdings of this sort; the rule is 30% of income. But other assets come into the equation at some point, too. Medicare allows up to $7.7K, I think. I could assume some pretty large bills there. The award would be burned away in a few months.

With what's going on in the other Washington, it could be very hard to get back on disability once I'd been removed. I hate to think about it, but I'm imagining washing dishes until I'm 65. Or 67, or whatever the retirement is by that time. Until death, as far as I know. There must be something better.

There's a financial worker at the mental health center who might have suggestions. At this point, the award almost seems like a gift from Dolos.

12/04/2016

Weird weekend. I'm hearing comments about "that guy" ("it's that guy," "there's that guy"), being shunned by women and even had an older lady tell me not to look at her as she walked past me at the bus stop. Can't think of anything I've said or done to trigger this. I'll just try to smile and get through it. That sometimes seems to work.

Got a notice from the building management the other day. It's a full page of compliance issues. Some of it could be directed at me, but it was sent out to everybody. I had begun feeling a little more friendly with Laura, the manager, but this is a little heavy-handed. I'm told she's very fussy on inspections, too.

Wednesday will be four years since I left the college. I haven't kept any contacts, except Peter Anderson, and he's in Chicago. I didn't make friends while I was there, was always out of the circle. I'm glad to be gone. After a few years, there was no fun in the work there, and I just didn't get along. Same as most places I've been.

12/07/2016

I'm much more relaxed tonight. Whatever happened over the weekend is over now. I don't know what it was, but everybody I looked at was unhappy about something, and wanted me to know. Nobody's come knocking at my door with a warning. The notice is a general message, not directed at any person or persons, but still a little unnerving.

A couple of the baristas have trying to cue me to chat more. I don't know if there's more to it, but I enjoy talking to both of them. One's a dancer, the other teaches dancing. Both are very nice, attractive and smart. The main thing that holds me back from asking either of them out is money. I'm always broke, and couldn't take them somewhere nice, or even to lunch. Maybe I can do that. Cutting back on coffee would free some funds. And then I wouldn't see them at all.

12/08/2016

People around the building are talking. There's a rumor that I'm gay. Some are even saying it out loud. I guess I dress color-coordinated, and I don't get laid. Part of me wants to prove my manhood, but I have a stronger urge not to be

manipulated by others. Makes me think of sixth grade, when Denny Werth started calling me “fag man,” just to agitate me. It worked for him. It doesn’t work now.

12/09/2016

I went to a PAB meeting (patient activity board, I think) at mental health yesterday. My nurse has been urging me to do this for social activity, saying great things about it. I stayed to the end, feeling like I didn’t belong there. I watched as other people nervously squirmed in their seats, possibly side effects from their medications. Some took it much too seriously, with one woman sounding off about buying an expensive camera and needing more back-up as the photographer. It was as if this was the most important event of their week. The activities were things like a church choir and a trip to the zoo. I need something more challenging, with greater rewards. Hanging out at the mental health center is backwards.

The last two conversations with Dad have gone nowhere. He’ll start calling me Jim. Once I explain to him who I am, he’ll ask Barb if she knows me. If she says yes, he’ll hand the phone to her. She can’t communicate on the phone, or at least can’t hear me. She doesn’t have a hearing problem, she just can’t grasp my words. For a minute, she’ll repeat “hi Jon,” then set the phone down, telling Dad I’m not there. That’s where it ends. They don’t hang the phone up, so I can’t call back. There’s no point in calling anymore; he doesn’t know who I am, and it’s impossible to talk to her. I love them more than ever, but we don’t have any communication anymore.

12/10/2016

Jeff finally went to DSHS to apply for medical assistance and food stamps. Mom had to escort him to be sure he followed through. He still has paperwork to complete. I hope he takes care of this soon. I’m not sure he will. He seems so overwhelmed. Even small tasks challenge him. His physical health is bad, psoriasis and a bum hip, and that must bring him down, as well as limit his job prospects. But he puts other limits on himself. He complains about the job market being digitized; he won’t consider commuting; he doesn’t follow through on leads; and it’s taken him all of this time for him to do something about his health. I can sympathize somewhat: drinking and mental illness put me on a cycle, where I took crappy jobs that lasted six to twelve months, then spent similar intervals unemployed. Like Jeff, I was in deep withdrawal at the end. I lived in the Pike/Pine corridor, and I was the local drunk. If Dad hadn’t offered to pay for me to go back to school, I don’t know where I’d be.

But Jeff’s been out of work for four years. It must have really crushed him when he lost his last job; he’d always had steady employment before that. I just read that psoriasis is associated with depression. I’ve thought that Jeff might have depression, but he needs to be diagnosed.

12/12/2016

I read that the rush from music is the release of dopamine in the brain, much like sex and drugs. I don't have the latter two in my life, I wonder if I'm using the blues as a substitute?

12/13/2016

I've made arrangements to see Jeff tomorrow. He's on the verge of an eviction and can't get help anywhere else right now. I'll refer him to the county housing authority and a mental health clinic. He'll resent the second one, but it's clear most of this is in his head. His physical impairments aggravate things, but what really holds him back is his state of mind. He'll need a reference from them, anyway, to get help from the housing authority.
12/14/2016

Thinking about how I'm going to say this to Jeff today. He'll completely write it off, at least at first. But if I tell him he needs to get a referral for housing first, he might listen. The words aren't coming to me now, but maybe "some of it's in your head," and mentioning the link between psoriasis and depression will make him listen. He can't get help from anyone else right now. It's too awkward for Joe, and Lori has her hands full with Dad. Mom does what she can, but she doesn't know how to help him. Jeff's asking her and Lori for $2,000 right now. The situation isn't tenable.

Jeff didn't show. He didn't answer when I called. I don't know what happened, but I have my own problems to worry about. Hopefully he's doing the other things he has to, but I'm not confident on that. Mom's wondering if he's drinking. My first thought was that he doesn't have the money to buy booze, but that didn't stop me. I'm ready to help if he asks for it, but he'll have to come to me.

12/15/2016

I'm getting bad feelings from people again. I never know what triggers this. Things that come to mind are they might be spying on me, and don't like what I write; the weather, it's been very cold; Harry downstairs has people thinking I'm a S.O.B and wants me driven from the premises and neighborhood; or it's in my head, and I'm exaggerating the whole thing to myself. I always look for messages from people, finding the best or the worst, never a pleasant medium.

12/16/2016

I can never come up with the right words for my psych nurse Kiera to describe what I go through. It's hard to explain to somebody else. It's hard to write about it, but I don't have to come up with the words spontaneously. Even in a therapeutic setting, it doesn't come to me naturally.

12/19/2016

There’s a young woman down the hall who I’ve been watching for a while. She’s a cute, fully-developed, African-American woman with an impish smile who’s made passes at me, even going so far as to lift her large breasts to show them to me. I’d like to do it with her, but her infant daughter holds me back. I have visions of being in bed with her while the baby is crying. Sweet little child, and she likes me, as does her mother. But I have no idea who the father is, and having an affair with somebody else’s child involved just isn’t appealing. Let alone whether she uses contraceptives. She’s a nice woman, but I can’t get past these barriers.

12/22/2016

I’ve been trying to have a conversation with the dancer at the coffee shop, but it falls with a thud. She isn’t much interested in me, other than as a customer. And I struggle to engage with women. I struggle with everybody, but with women I’m shy and lack confidence. Damned if I don’t know the dancer’s name. I’ve known her for over a year, and thought it was Danielle, but that was a different barista. I’m almost embarrassed to ask her now.

I got some strange gestures yesterday that I’m not sure what to make of. Walking home from the store, I said hello to a guy who responded with some kind of gesture with his tongue and cheek. Then while I was waiting for the elevator to go upstairs, another guy made a gesture as if to throw me a kiss, waving his finger from his lips. This guy is weird anyway, but coming in succession, it’s driving me crazy. What message were they trying to send me? I can only guess.

Just went out for a cigarette, and on my way back, as they were getting off the elevator downstairs, the women looked down at the floor to avoid eye contact with me. This is getting too strange.

12/24/2016

I hate the holiday season. Always have. It makes for loooong weekends on Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year, Thanksgiving was to mean spending three days out of four hopping on the bus going out to Auburn and Puyallup for family “traditions.” Christmas is a little better, it’s only two days. For many years, the tradition was to spend Christmas Eve at Mom’s, then the next day at Dad’s. I always hated it. Didn’t get along with my step family, and it’s a long bus ride. I was usually hung over, anyway. Now Lori has her own tradition. I’m thinking of skipping it, but I’ll feel guilty if I do. Maybe I’ll spend some time with Theresa. She spends her holidays are alone, except for her dog.

I forgot my building access card this morning, *twice*. I’ve never done that before, not once in over 20 years. This is going to be a bad weekend.

12/25/2016

I can’t even have a peaceful night with family. People seemed cold toward me, not saying anything, but seeming to have something between them unfavorable to me. My sister’s daughters, Nicole and Jenny, in particular, Nicole and I didn’t exchange a word that I can recall. Jenny tried to bait me with a comment about renter protection laws. Nicole’s daughter, Madison, kept giving me a look. I don’t know how to describe it, but it was something between empathy and fear. I had a good chat with Nicole’s husband, Ryan, but I kept wondering what his motive was. And I’m wondering what they’re saying about me when I’m not around. Shouldn’t worry about that, but this is family, and it would be nice to know I get some respect from them, and support.

I got some great gifts from Mom, but she usually includes cash. She didn’t do so this time, and I’m down to $25 until the 3rd. A gift card for Wild Ginger, my favorite restaurant, isn’t going to help much. She gives a lot on the holidays, and I hate to ask her for more. I’m not sure where else to go, though.

12/27/2016

I borrowed $150 from Mom yesterday, and it’s nearly gone already. I didn’t make any big ticket purchases, just small things in the $10-$20 range. There were a lot of things I needed right away, that couldn’t wait until the third. I have to get income streaming in. I’m looking at dishwashing. I’m also looking for a labor pool that pays the same day. I did that years ago. They make arduous deductions, but sometimes there isn’t a better option. I need to get money in my pocket right now. The only one I’ve found so far pays you to a debit account. This always carries outrageous fees. I remember an agency on the waterfront, a non-profit. People were hired for day jobs there, and paid directly by the employer. No deductions. Don’t know if it’s still there. I can’t think of the name, and it doesn’t turn up in google. I don’t know who to ask. Trying Facebook now.

12/29/2016

It’s the Millionaire Club. Uncle Rick knew what I was talking about. Enrollment is Tuesday, which doesn’t help me now. I’ll have my Social Security check by that time. I plan to go, anyway.
I have an appointment today with Holly, an employment counselor at mental health. I don’t know what I’ll do but I have to do something. I don’t want anything challenging right now, and not anything that requires a lot of inter-mingling. I’m way behind on technology. I’m not in shape to do a lot of lifting or manual labor. Washing dishes is about the only thing that comes to mind. This is a lot like it was back in the 80s, although I was physically stronger then.

I went to a payday loan shark to get an advance on my SS check. With interest and fees, I’ll owe $69 on a $60 loan next week. They’re ruthless, preying on poor people. But where else do you go?

Holly wants me to put a list together of jobs that I would like to work. She doesn’t feel that I would stay very long washing dishes, maybe a couple of

months. Then what? She might be right, but what else is there? With my limitations, there isn't much I can see myself doing right now. I can't go back to IT. I haven't had a job in three years, and that lasted two months. There's the blog. It doesn't make money, but it's employment and it avoids the question, "what have you been doing all of this time?"

What besides dishwashing? I just don't see anything right now. Maybe something will come to me between now and next Friday, but I've thought of this already. I really don't know.

1/03/2017

Something else I spoke with Holly about was references. My list is outdated. They're people I haven't been in contact with since I left the college four years ago. The only one to keep is Peter, but I don't know who else to add. I have no professional refs anymore. Topher at Harborview might be one, but he left there about when I did, and I have no idea how to contact him. Holly suggested people I visit frequently, such as barbers or baristas. I don't even know any of the names of the people at the coffee shop. When I get my hair cut, I go to the same place, but it's always somebody different. I have few friends, but I could add Theresa to the list. She knows me, and would have good things to say about my character. But beyond that, I don't know. That's three, if I can get a hold of Topher, but usually they request four. I can't think who the last one would be. This is going to be hard.

1/04/2017

It goes fast. I got my SSDI check yesterday, and it's half gone. Cigarettes aren't breaking me, but they aren't helping things, either. The rent, as low as it is, takes a big chunk right off the bat. That's to be expected. But I paid Money Tree back for the loan, got some minutes for my pre-paid phone, groceries, etc. I still have to pay for internet access. It's $46.99, and I don't even get broadband, by most standards. There's cheaper access available for low income families, but it would be too slow to be worth the savings. It would take up to 30 minutes to upload my encrypted files. The larger ones would take overnight. And that can interrupt streaming, where I play music all of the time. It's hard to find ways to cut back on expenses. Cigarettes and coffee could be cut, but I don't know that this would really be a solution. With the little money I'm getting, I can't make ends meet.

I'm going to the Millionaire Club next Tuesday. Doing odd jobs at $15 an hour a couple of days a week will help things. We'll see how my physical and mental condition allows me to go through with it. I have fears, but I have to have more income coming in.

1/07/2017

Jeff will be moving in with Mom. She isn't excited about this, but he'll be evicted soon, and she doesn't see a better way out of this. I'd like to see him get a mental

health evaluation; there's a clinic in Kent that can refer him to King County Housing Authority. With an eviction notice, he should get an affordable unit pretty quickly. He won't do these things, though. If you suggest something to him, he nods, and indicates he'll try that route, then never follows through. I've mentioned the services offered at WorkSource several times, and each time he says he'll go by there the next day. He doesn't, or just steps in to glance. I've told him they have classes, He's said he can't find these. He doesn't even ask them about it, from what I can tell. He hasn't spoken to an adviser. There are full-time staff there to advise job seekers of resources and help to direct them. From what he says, he hasn't spoken to anybody.

Maybe living with somebody to prod and encourage him will make a difference. Somebody to remind him to follow through on things. Mom's health is beginning to decline, to the point that she's often in pain, and she could use some help taking care of her home. Maybe Jeff will step up here.

Lori tells me Dad can't stand up right now. He fights when they try to help him out of bed, apparently resenting the feeling of being helpless. He knows who I am when I call, but when we get past the formalities, he fades out. Same with Barb. I'm actually talking to her, though, something I haven't done in a while. I gave up at one point, but Dad insisted on passing her the phone this time. It went fairly well. Then the phone went silent after a few minutes. She placed it on the table again, apparently expecting somebody else to pick it up. I could hear Lori talking in the background.

1/09/2017

I called the law firm and the settlement check is scheduled to be sent in March. I guess I should start moving on this. I need to talk to an attorney to set up a trust fund. I got a reference from Kiera, and I'll call tomorrow. I just hope I see the money. I don't know what kind of arrangement it will be, or if I'll have access to it before I'm 65. An allowance would just be deducted from my Social Security check, so I'd be right where I am, only draining the account. The attorney's name is Craig Combs; maybe he has ideas.

I saw Holly again, this time for an intake. Nothing interesting, except after about 45 minutes, she suddenly stopped. She'd been coughing, but said that wasn't the reason. She hesitated, then said she was thirsty, then said she needed some tea. I offered her a breath strip, but she said no. It's the kind of thing I can't get my mind off of. I don't have any idea what happened. Maybe she *was* thirsty, but we were nearly finished. She couldn't wait a few more minutes? We made long eye contact at times. Was she uncomfortable? Nice woman, very cute. That makes it harder to keep this out of my head.

1/10/2017

Still wondering about Holly yesterday. When I left her office, I heard a laugh. Did I do something amusing? I'm sure I didn't creep her out. There are stranger

people than myself at the center, and she wouldn't bat an eye. It was just a strange thing, and it's eating at me. Most people wouldn't understand, but they weren't there.

I didn't sleep last night. I was up at 4 AM, still restless. In addition to Holly, I was to go to the Millionaire Club at 8 and contact a lawyer later. I guess having all this on my mind kept me up. I didn't go to MC, I was too tired, and will go next week instead. I criticize Jeff for delaying things, but I guess I do the same. I left a message on Craig's voicemail. It will be a day or two before I hear back.

1/11/2016

I spoke to Craig today, and I think he misunderstood what I was asking for. He referred me to a fiduciary, who I believe would hold the trust in my name. I just want the legal steps to create such a trust. I'm not looking for a holder. Mom or Joe would have this role. I have no idea where to start. I think I'll contact Jeff Bell. He was an accountant at one time, and may know something or someone to get this in play.

1/14/2017

Monday is a holiday, and Tuesday will be very busy. I need to be at the Millionaire Club at 8:00 AM, and then to the DSHS office from there. They're both in Belltown, so I won't waste a lot of time traveling, but I don't have any idea how long these will take. It could be two hours at the former. They said in an email enrollment is from 8 to 10; they didn't say if I could walk in anytime in between, or if the enrollment is two hours long.

I'm up for a review for state assistance, and this requires an interview. They recommend doing so by phone. I tried this several times, but the wait time was over an hour! I can't afford this on my prepaid cellphone. I'm going to do it in person. I've been through this before, and it's a pain. Long waits, just as on the phone. Maybe I should try calling one more time before going out there.

I'm seeing Holly at 3. I still can't get over the quick cut-off the last time. Something couldn't wait, and I don't think it was tea.

1/15/2017

I'm bored tonight, listening to the music but nothing else looks interesting. I'd usually go to bed at about this time, but I have too much energy. There's nothing interesting online, other than a post on Facebook by Joe that's eating at me. "Responsibility is for suckers" (sarcasm, I'm sure). When I saw it, it struck me as something out of character for him. Is he losing patience with Jeff? Did he say it with me in the back of his mind? He has two brothers who haven't had a paying job in years. I'm lucky: I have a nice apartment at a fraction of the market rate, I get disability payments to get me by, and Mom helps when I need it. I'm dependent on a lot of people. To some people, this not living responsibly. I

sometimes feel the same way. When I first moved to Jefferson Terrace, I swore I wouldn't end up like so many people here, who have no job or prospects. But I'm just like that now. I struggled for so many years, but the last four years, with a couple of exceptions, I've lost any independence I had.

Traffic has been way up on my website for a couple of months. Unfortunately, I don't really know how much of that is readers and how much is spammers or hackers. It's been compromised once. My writing is improving lately, though, and I've been updating the blog more frequently. There's no doubt there's been more interest in it. I'll have to figure out a way to get money out of it soon. There's never been enough traffic to do anything before, but if it keeps rising, I might sneak in a few ads.

1/16/2017

I've been waiting for a chance to talk to one of the baristas for a couple of months, and finally had an opportunity this morning. Usually, she's behind the machine, and I get my coffee at the cash register. Today she was the only one there. I tried to start with the easiest subject possible, "how was your weekend?" She talked about doing some freelancing and taking dance lessons, and I could only respond to the question with, "not much." That pretty much killed the conversation. I tried to keep it open by asking her questions, but I was dying. I could have at least mentioned the blog. That can make an interesting conversation, and it shows a part of me people don't otherwise see.

I'm going in to the MC in the morning. This will be a big test for me. I haven't done any physical labor in decades, and not long ago, I couldn't even lift a TV. Then there's getting along with other people, avoiding isolating like I so often do. Being under direct supervision is something else I struggle with. It gives me a feeling I don't have control over what I'm doing. I lose independence. And it just creeps me to be monitored by anybody. I have to do this. That's what I keep telling myself.

1/17/2017

The Millionaire Club has a lengthy procedure for new employees. It isn't like I remember it at day labor places before, but that was a long time ago. There were two interviews. The first was questions about my work skills, experience, and training, and various agreements. The second one began to repeat the questions of the first. After a couple of minutes, I mentioned this to the interviewer. She left for five minutes. When she returned, she ran a background check. This made me nervous: I once found out I had a warrant for my arrest that took me completely by surprise. It had been issued in Olympia, regarding some checks I wrote before I left in '86. Those checks had bounced, and I was being charged for fraud. As I laid on the ground after a bar fight, the officer laughed and did a check, arresting me on the spot. So now, I never know what might come up from my past, even after all of these years, when someone does a check on me. There was nothing this time.

They want me to return tomorrow, or any Wednesday, for a three-hour orientation. WTF? I can't work until I've done this. And I won't get paid until I work. The labor pools I remember wanted to put you to work ASAP. I have to get in touch with DSHS pretty quickly, and my intention was to call tomorrow morning. I'll set the alarm, and see how I feel.

The people at the MC were as you'd expect, many down-and-out, some probably needing money for drugs or alcohol. It's usually a last resort. It was for me at one time.

1/19/2017

Jeff's in serious trouble tonight. He missed a courtdate for a DUI charge recently, and got pulled over for a bad taillight. He's in jail, and will see a judge in the morning. Mom's confirmed he has a serious drinking problem. He moved in with her this week, and raids the bar after she goes to bed. Hearing her describe his situation, a lot of it sounds familiar. I don't know if I should intervene at this point. I've tried to help him already, but he brushes it off. He doesn't want help, unless it will buy him a drink or pay the bills. I've been there, and there was no point in talking to me.

1/20/2017

I'm debating whether to go to the rally this evening. I hate going to those things alone. I remember Occupy a few years ago. I made attempts to meet people, but no one showed any interest. I snuck into an alley frequently for a cigarette. The marches were especially hard. I tried to stay in the middle, in relative anonymity, but found myself drifting towards the front. At one point, the marchers split. Suddenly everyone was waiting for me. I stopped at an intersection, not knowing what to do as a pickup truck approached. I froze. Suddenly I was the center of attention. Nobody said anything, but it was a terrifying position to be in.

When we reached the end of the march, everyone was packed, shoulder to shoulder, in front of the city hall. I struggled to find an open space. Then I realized I just needed to get out of there. But I also wanted to stay to the end. I really wanted it to end soon.

There was the rally for Social Security last year, with a big crowd to hear Bernie Sanders. This wasn't as bad. Everyone's eyes were turned to the podium. I still wasn't as comfortable as I would like to be, and when the Black Lives Matter woman took over the podium to disrupt the event, I decided it was time to go.

I had a seizure a little while ago. Maybe telling myself this isn't a good idea tonight. Kiera thinks I should try to go to the women's march tomorrow. That isn't in my plans right now.

Jeff will be in jail for a month, then to rehab. He's in bad shape. The judge was going to sentence him to six months, but I'm not sure Jeff could have survived that. Right now, he's angry, scared and depressed; all very familiar to me. I never really quite got over these, but I manage them better now. There are things I can tell him that would help, but he doesn't listen. I've told him I'm there for him, and maybe I should do this again, and pay him a visit. I doubt he'd skip this one.

I doubled my medication tonight. Not intentionally, occasionally I feel pretty sure I haven't taken it yet, and do it a second time. I realize this when I start to get dizzy and can't get up. It's kind of like being high on weed, but it's not a good high. All I can do is lay down through it.

I want to visit Jeff, but I don't know what we'd talk about. He's very upset right now, and that's understandable. But I've been in his shoes, and I got through it. I can help him. The problem is, our talks tend to turn into confrontations. Maybe that's in the past now, as he's reached rock bottom, and maybe he'll admit that he needs help.

1/24/2016

I've been having some incredible dreams lately, or it would seem. When I wake, all I can remember is the last moment. But I feel excited, like something important just happened. Usually I just sleep through my dreams, not having any recollection of them the next day. Occasionally I can log a dream, but that doesn't happen very often. Now it's waking me up, but I can't piece it together. I feel like it's something I should know.

1/26/2017

I went to the payday lender again. Borrowed $75 this time, and $50 was gone within an hour. I really have to get to work. I can't continue this way.

The orientation at MC lasted the full three hours, and it was boring as hell. I did find out a few important things: The debit cards are loaded with fees. Lauren told me otherwise in the interview. It might be possible to have paychecks deposited directly to my checking account. There's also a procedure of getting ID badges, and I'll have to be in before 8:00 to get a work assignment. They recommend being there by *6:00*. That would be pushing it too far.

David down the hall is missing this morning. I have no idea what's going on or what the worry is about. I saw him yesterday, so there wouldn't seem to be any reason to be alarmed at his point. He does have mood swings, and maybe something he said before leaving has them worried.

Dave's a good friend, developmentally disabled but taking great pride in his ability to do practical things. He mends his own clothes, cuts his own hair, repairs things. He doesn't do a very good job, but it gives him a sense of independence and self-reliance. I kind of envy him for that. I need all of the

support I can get, and never had any handy skills. I was never mechanically inclined, and never adapted a skilled trade. Never had any interest, either. I always did the abstract, or the menial, low-paying jobs that had no future.

I hope Dave's all right. He would be sorely missed here. He's a good neighbor and a good friend. I've seen him when he was down, but he's always come out of it. He's been particularly cheerful of late, so I can't imagine he's doing anything to harm himself. People take advantage of him, often asking him for money. He never says no. I think I'll ask the social worker Winnie what the alarm is about.

Dave returned just as I was talking to Winnie. He's in good spirits. He says a security guard told him to go to the mission downtown, and he slept there. Says he lost everything he was carrying. It's hard to gather exactly what happened, but he's fine. A lot of hugs.

1/27/2017

I'm actually debating between food and cigarettes. Maybe I need to give it up. My refrigerator is mostly stocked, but I don't have any lunch items. I usually go with one big meal anyway, but it isn't healthy. I don't have enough smokes to last through the weekend. Money is a big stresser for me, and cigarettes are the only remedy I have for the anxiety.

I didn't go to MC this morning. I thought I set my alarm, but I didn't wake until 7:30, too late to be there at the 8:00 cutoff. It looks like I'll start Monday. I won't see a check there until the 8th. I'll need to borrow money again between now and next week, but that has to stop. It will be nice to have this check coming in March; I'm still not sure how I will handle it, but it will be a relief.

1/28/2017

I'm sleepy this weekend. Bored, broke, it has that effect on me. I had a couple rolls of dimes in my drawer. That was enough for a pack of cigarettes. The clerk at the gas station was nice enough to take it, even though he had to count it out. People waited in line behind me. I felt obligated to apologize, but I wasn't really sorry. I felt a little bad for the clerk.

I haven't posted on the blog in over a week. I'm in a rut. I'm trying to get things done, I stayed busy for most of the week, but I didn't accomplish much. The blog has been in the background. I have other things I have to do. There are a couple of things to post about tonight: A favorite local artist who I write about frequently has some big news, and the local blues awards nominations are out. I just have to sit down and write.

1/29/2017

I missed two more rallies, the immigration ban. These were more spontaneous, and I didn't have any idea they were happening until I began seeing photos on

Facebook. Awesome turnouts, considering they were unplanned. I wish I could take part in these things; they're about things I believe in, but the crowds keep me away. I haven't had good experiences.

I borrowed $100 from Mom to get by til the 3rd. That won't be easy. I need to cut way back on smoking, but I'm not doing very well so far. I was down to a half a pack a day, but lately it's been back to 20. I need to be out, busy, where I can't smoke.

2/01/2017

I finally returned to the Millionaire Club, but not to go to work. I'll do that Friday. I couldn't sleep last night, and wasn't going to get up at 6:00 AM. I went there later to get a badge and to arrange for direct deposit. I couldn't believe it when she told me there were no charges on the debit account, and I was right.

Every month, I update my budget. I'm never within my means, and it's almost laughable that I even bother to do this. I can see, though, that if I gave up smoking, I might be able to get by on Social Security check. That's not gonna happen right now. Quitting drinking was easy. I had to do it, and there was a carrot dangling in front of me. Balancing the budget just isn't the same.

2/08/2017

I'm giving up on women. One of the elevators broke down this morning. Going out for a cigarette was taking 20, 30 minutes, worse than usual. Not very interesting, but you'd think it would be a conversation starter. So I started chatting with one of the barista, and mentioned it when she asked about my day. She asked if I'd been caught on the elevator. I said no, but kidding, "that really would have made my day." She replied "yea, would have been a story." Ouch! My life isn't very interesting, but couldn't she just go along? Be friendly, act interested? I struggle with conversation, say stupid things or just don't come up with the words. I feel a surge of confidence, and get shot right down.

After ten days off, I'm back on my blog. Four posts in two days, that's not bad. Visits are down from last month, but that was a record for me, and there's still three weeks to go.

A discussion on Facebook about mental illness and violence got me thinking about my past. The association between the two is a misconception; people with mental disabilities are no more prone to violence than then rest of the population. Still, I was pretty violent growing up, into my 20s. I'm wondering when it started, and ended. The first violent act of any kind that I can remember was throwing a book at Denny Werth. He'd been agitating me for months. It worked: He didn't bother me after that, and I got sympathy from classmates. I did far worse things over the years, but it must have started with that.

The last incident I remember was diving at the bartender in Olympia. I was beaten badly, and spent the weekend in jail. That was enough. I didn't think about it then, but I haven't been in a fight since. That was nearly thirty years ago.

The more I think about it, that probably wasn't an insult at all today. I'm just too sensitive.

Sunday, 2/12/2017

I keep telling myself I have to get out and exercise, just taking a 20 minute walk. I'm not going farther than the coffee shop on the corner. I have some bad habits I need to break, like eating heavily in the evening and staying glued to my chair all day long. I'm not gonna live much longer the way I'm doing things now.

Wednesday, 2/15/2017

I finally made it out to the MC this morning. It was a slow day, and I didn't arrive until 7:30. I stayed til 9, and nobody went out in that time. There was an opportunity to attend a safety workshop. Most of the people in the room either went there, or to the weekly orientation. There was a very nice woman at the booth, Lily. We talked for about five minutes when I came in, with her reviewing my work experience. She's very bright and friendly, likes to help people. I hope I can get to know her.

Dad fell out of bed this weekend, and cut his ear. He needed stitches. He was in the hospital when I called Sunday, which had me a little concerned, but the new place seems to be taking very good care of him. He was angry at me when I called Monday night. Lori, Nicole and maybe others had visited that day. He noticed I wasn't there. I explained to him, I didn't know anything about it, and don't have a car anyway. I need to plan visits days in advance. He wouldn't forgive me, and said Barb wouldn't, either. I'm sure he'll have forgotten about this by the next time I call him. I don't know what to make of it. That he noticed, and missed me, is a good sign, I guess. He was also unreasonable about it. I can look at it either way.

Friday, 2/17/2017

Went to the Millionaire Club again this morning. I got there a half hour earlier, about 7:00. Again, it was a slow day. Only two people were sent out. I won't have a check from them next week. I'll go back Tuesday, but it's already the middle of the month, and I need money now.

Lily wasn't at the window this morning. She was out on the floor, busy with a clipboard, talking to people and going in and out of the office. She is a very stunning woman. Talking to her at the window, I looked at her in the eye, and didn't see much below her shoulders. Today I saw she has some nice curves, very

healthy build. I tried not to gawk at her, but had a little trouble keeping my eyes off of her.

I stopped at a place called Biscuit Bitches in Belltown on my way home. They specialize in biscuits and gravy, and coffee. The cashier was friendly, but the barista acted like a bitch. I got the feeling she she knows who I am and decided she doesn't like me. Never seen her before. I haven't even been to Belltown much for a long time until this week. I must have a reputation with the coffee crowd.

Monday, 2/21/2017

I went to the Millionaire Club a third time this morning, and still no work. I'm not really enthused about it, but I need to get money coming in, and a regular job, four or five days a week, isn't something I'm ready to manage right now. Besides, it's a pleasure to see Lily in the morning. I want to stop her, chat with her, but she moves quickly, and there's little opportunity to catch her. Maybe she'll be back at the window tomorrow.

I was up at 5:30, but it was two hours before I arrived at MC. I'm not sure how it ended up taking so long. I need to be there before 7. The doors open at 6, but that would be pushing it.

It's an interesting place. It's open to the public from 6 to 8, not just workers. Street people come in to use a shower, washer and dryer, or just hang out for a while. I'd guess that half the people leave when the security guard calls at 7:45. They serve breakfast and lunch. If you're homeless, or just down-and-out, it's a great service.

Friday, 2/24/2017

Still no work at MC. I think I've been there five times now, but I was late twice, and also came on Fridays twice. I'd expect those days to be a little slow. I'll continue next Monday. I'm thinking about asking about a job at the MC itself; it would be an interesting place to work.

I had chances with Lily today. There's a second window that I hadn't noticed. I often miss details like that. I made a bee line for the first window, and sat down after checking in. That was when I noticed the other window, and Lily was there. Later I checked out to get a coffee. I was out for 10 or 15 minutes. A few minutes after I was back, Lily came in the door. She'd been outside, too. Later as she was walking past me, she dropped her keys. She smiled and commented on my Red Sox cap. I smiled back but said very little, and she walked on. I can't let this slip by. I know very little about her, but she's special, and there won't be many more chances like this.

Saturday, 2/25/2017

I'm going to have to borrow from the payday lender again. I was afraid of this. It will be hard to break this cycle until the settlement comes. I finally made an appointment with a fiduciary yesterday. I don't have any idea what this will lead to, but if I can cover my bills and rent with a trust fund, things will settle down. In the meantime, I have to get work. So far the MC isn't doing this for me. I'm not giving up yet, but it might be a dead end.

Tuesday, 2/28/2017

I'm about to give up on MC. The only reason to continue going there is Lily, and I didn't even see her today. It was unusually packed. I guess it's the end of the month, and everybody's tapped out until they get their gov't. checks tomorrow. I stayed a couple of hours, but it became apparent I wasn't going to be called to work and I wouldn't have a chance to talk to Lily.

Dad isn't in good shape. This may be the worst he's been yet. He won't sit up, he lays his head on the table; his head is hanging to one side; he can't have an intelligible conversation. Lori wonders if it's a mini-stroke, I'm wondering if he isn't just giving up.

Friday, 3/03/2017

MC just isn't working. I'll try one more time. I have an appointment with Holly next week. Maybe she can give me some advice. I don't want to work four or five days a week doing something menial; I couldn't handle that at this point. I have to get my feet wet first. Really, all I want right now is something to subsidize my disability check. There are other temp labor pools. I have bad memories, though. They were exploitative, paid minimum wage and made deductions to that, and lied often. MC always had a good reputation for treating workers well.

Sunday, 3/05/2017

I'm getting the cold treatment again. I never know what brings this on. I have periods when people seem extremely friendly, and then weeks like this, when women won't even give me a friendly look. I was going into a coffee shop by the MC Friday, and a lady leaving looked at me and quickly turned away. I smiled and said hi, but she just hurried on. It's been similar to this everywhere. I picture people sitting around a table, or maybe a forum online, discussing the next action. It's synchronized, no question about it.

I've been thinking today: From 1994 through 2011, I worked continuously for 18 years. After I got sober, therapy and medication, and stable housing, I was stable and productive. That might not impress most people who work all their lives, but these days I keep thinking back on the years that I couldn't keep a job, and spent long periods out of work. As if that's what defines me. I can't forget about it, but that isn't where I am now.

Tuesday, 3/07/2017

Lily was at the window at MC this morning. She was discouraging, and went so far as to suggest I should leave. It wasn't even 7:00, but there were a lot of people ahead of me. I couldn't help wondering if I should take it personally, though. I stayed for an hour, and we had a friendly chat when I went to check out. Only one person had been sent out. I found out she's multilingual: English, Spanish and Japanese. This always impresses me; I could never pick up a second language myself. Tried Spanish a couple of times, but couldn't grasp it. Anyway, I got my feet wet. It was pouring rain, and I was wearing leaky sneakers.

Saturday, 3/11/2017

I saw Holly yesterday. She sent me job reference during the week for an IT position, with interns encouraged to apply. I told her I've been away for four years, and haven't practiced or kept up with the technology. I also don't want to step into a regular 20 to 40 hour, four or five day a week position until I get my feet wet and see how things work out with a limited schedule. I've been away for four years, and am not in a hurry.

Right now I might just as well be coming out of high school. My experience is outdated and I'm basically starting from scratch. Holly seems to understand this. We'll see what she can do to help me along.

Tuesday, 3/14/2017

Going to see a fiduciary agent this afternoon. I'm really not looking forward to talking about my personal life to a stranger. It's just my disability, income and unemployment, but these are nobody else's business. It will be his business.

Yesterday really was a surprise. I usually see moods change with the weather. It was pouring rain all day, but people were very friendly, approaching me to smile and make comments. I was approachable, and returned the gestures. Whatever was happening before seems to be over.

The fiduciary I went to isn't aimed at small accounts. The guy said it would be wiped out by fees in a few years. There's a non-profit exactly for my needs, though. They have pooled trusts specifically for disabled people. I'll call tomorrow, and I'll also check with my credit union. It would be nice to have everything in the same place.

Sunday, 3/19/2017

I got most done this week that I intended, but there's still a lot more to do. I haven't been to the Millionaire Club in a couple of weeks, but I don't think there's any point in returning, except to see Lily again. I have to wonder if it's worth getting up at 5:00 AM when there's little chance of being sent to work, and I don't feel much better about my chances with Lily. Being away for a while, my hope seems to be fading for no particular reason. Maybe I'll try once more.

Jeff should be released from jail very soon. It's been delayed because the rehab clinics don't have openings. He's finally talking to his lawyer, only after Mom insisted he do this. He was just waiting it out, not knowing what to do, depending on others to do the legwork. If Mom hadn't been there to nudge him, he could have been locked up for months and nobody would have noticed.

Sunday, 3/26/2017

I've been hit by a rash of seizures this week. I don't remember the last time this happened. I can't even remember the last time I had at least one seizure before this. The medication has been working very well to this point, and this is the exception. I'll just have to get through it.

Tuesday, 3/28/2017

I'm going back to Money Tree this week. This will be four months in a row. I don't see an end to it. Money is a big stresser for me. I smoke when I'm stressed. Cigarettes are breaking my bank. And so on.

My sleeping pattern is getting worse. I wake up, restless, at 3, 4 AM. I get up for a little while, and that extends to about 5. I sleep for a few more hours, but I'm not rested. I try to catch up during the day, but that probably makes it worse. I'm cutting back on coffee. I used to have a cappuccino for dessert. I've dropped that, but it isn't helping. It would be nice to have one right now.

Eating is also a problem. I usually eat a pretty healthy diet, balanced and nutritional. I can be creative preparing meals. I don't have any desire to do this now, and I'm getting by on frozen foods or soup or ramen. At one point, I wasn't eating at all, until about 8:00 at night. It would suddenly dawn on me that I hadn't had anything to eat that day. I wasn't hungry, and didn't have a mental appetite. I ate because I knew I had to.

Hygiene continues to be a problem. I shave once a week. I shower just as often. My teeth are decaying. I have to see a dentist, but I have no dental coverage, and right now, all I could have done is have a tooth pulled.

I have to talk to Kiera about these things. It might be depression.

Friday, 3/31/2017

I just talked to Kiera. Why do I feel worse? I didn't care for her suggestions. I went over the things that might be stressing me: One elevator not operating, making for long trips out for a cigarette and packed crowds; preparing to go back to the workplace; money problems; lack of sleep. Her suggestions were to stay out longer, and to go to a cheaper (less convenient) grocery store. Cut back on coffee, as I already have. I didn't really care for these suggestions, and tried

to be positive, but my attitude was obvious. I left feeling guilty, but I went with an open mind, and didn't feel like much came of it.

Sunday, 4/02/2017

I'm screwed. There was a noise in the building yesterday, and the manager came to check it. It was on the roof, above my apartment. I was smoking inside, a violation of the rules. She didn't knock on my door, but I may be hearing from her tomorrow. There's already a fucking inspection. I work my butt off, but never pass these. Not once in over twenty years. They're always back a second or a third time. I can't make them happy. The intrusion is bad enough. Now I can add an eviction notice.

I had been feeling pretty good. I've been sleeping well for a few days. I woke at 2:00 a couple of times, and had a cigarette, but went right back to sleep. The last two nights, I've slept straight through. I've been rested and in good spirits. Until this morning.

I'm anxious and depressed tonight. I have no appetite. I need to shower, but I just want to sit and sulk. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. I worked hard at it, I'm pretty sure they're going to nit-pick and mark me down. They always do. There's something different every year. Last time the vent was dirty in my bathroom. They've never marked people for that before. For some reason, they decided to crack down. There was something else, but the vent was the topper. It really got to me. I complained about it, but that was pointless. They weren't going to reverse it.

The cigarette is really worrying me. If they smelled it, I'm in trouble. There have been warnings. I'm not doing it today, but a notice will probably be on my door. There's also a fine if it happens more than once, $200 as I understand it. Tomorrow is going to be hell.

Monday, 4/03/2017

I'm much calmer this morning. Ready to take what the day brings. I had trouble going to sleep, but once I did, I slept soundly. The weather is nice, they aren't going to ruin it for me.

Again, the inspection was completely divergent to previous ones. She was concerned with maintenance and work orders. She didn't even seem to care how clean it was. There were some things I thought she'd nitpick, like dust and stains. Instead it was lights and faucet taps. They'll be back to fix the problems she found. I didn't pass the inspection.

Tuesday, 4/04/2017

The elevator has been offline for over two weeks now, and it's really grating me. Long trips, packed cars. Many people in the building show no elevator etiquette,

such as not stopping cars until they return to your floor. I make two or three extra stops because people on the 15th and 16th floor don't want to wait for it to turn around. Often people will push both the up and down buttons, stopping it twice. Or people on the second floor leave before the elevator arrives. Just take the stairs, let the car pass.

This morning the one elevator was malfunctioning, and I walked up 17 flights of stairs. I spoke to somebody on the emergency intercom, but since I wasn't locked inside, he didn't see it as an emergency. I tried to call a second time to emphasize that NO elevators were operating in the building at the time, but I spoke to someone else who wouldn't even talk to me because I was a resident, and not a manager!

Thursday, 4/06/2017

Back to the 4AM stint. I've been up 45 minutes, and already had a cup of coffee. I'm anxious to get out, but nothing's open. I might take a walk after this.

Both elevators are finally functioning again. The building management couldn't wait any longer after the incident the other day. Who would think something like a box on a cable could be so important to so many people?

The housing inspector has been giving me very friendly looks. It seems like more than a polite exchange. Then, I get that feeling often.

Jeff's in complete denial. He can't say why he was in jail or in rehab. A lot of people go through this. It was different for me. I knew I had a problem for years, but no desire to get help. It covered up deeper problems that I didn't want to face. Some that I still haven't fully taken care of, but I've made progress.

Friday, 4/07/2017

The elevator's stalled again. There haven't been big crowds going in and out, but if they don't fix it today, this weekend's gonna suck.

I finally discussed trust funds with a professional fund manager, specializing in special needs cases like mine. It's not as good as I'd hoped. Social Security rules don't allow payments for things such as rent, food or basic living expenses. These are already provided by SSA, so they say, and additional funds going toward these are considered extra income. Broadband, clothing would be acceptable, but wouldn't make a dent in my budget. Maybe entertainment would go through, going to a show once in a while. The only entertainment I get now is listening to the radio through the day and occasionally downloading albums, Ah, the website! Maybe I'll upgrade that.

Saturday, 4/08/2017

I woke up at three AM. I stayed up for a while, but this time, turned the music on and went back to bed. I had some strange dreams after that. I like to log my dreams, at least the interesting ones. Lately, at least back to November, I haven't been able to remember my dreams, only the last moment. They were much more vivid this morning.

Wednesday,4/12/2017

The settlement check will come soon, in the next month or two. I'll be able to afford things I couldn't afford before, and yet I'll still be broke every month. The biggest expenses will still eat up my Social Security check, but there will be money available on the side for "irregular" items, such as entertainment or clothing. It will be complicated. I won't just be issued a check or a debit card; it will have to go through a third party, and they'll be reimbursed. It'll be a pain for everybody involved.

Friday, 4/14/2017

I'm scheduled to work one day a week volunteer at the food bank beginning next week. It's just a couple of hours, but it will help in the transition back to the workforce. I've also applied to volunteer at the former Experience Music Project, now focused on broader pop culture. I would be handling equipment in the sound lab. It would be a good experience, something to write about, but I think they want people with more knowledge and experience than myself.
My case has been split at the mental health center. Kiera is still my nurse, but now I have a case manager. I met Linda today. It seemed to take an awful long time. I mentioned that I badly need dental care, but can't afford it. She mentioned that I have Medicaid. There are two kinds, though: QMB and CNP. One provides dental coverage. She didn't know what my status was, and just kept talking about it for ten, fifteen minutes. I was hungry, and wanted to stop. We made no progress. We set another date in a month. I hope she's not always like this.

Saturday, 4/15/2017

I'm eating and sleeping now. Not just frozen pizza, things like teriyaki and creole. I'm spending a little more time preparing and having some good meals. I have an appetite. Until recently I haven't had any mental desire to eat. I'm not having late night cappuccinos, too, and that's helping with my sleep pattern. Nothing after 5 or 6 o'clock. I feel a lot better.

I had a great morning. I was walking to the Coffee Tree over on Madison and a woman came up beside me to chat. I once asked her out to a coffee, but seemed to creep her out. She rushed off the elevator without saying anything. Today she was very friendly. We talked about food. She walked very fast for some reason. That was okay. I offered to buy her a beverage, but she was in a hurry to get to the gym. Inside the coffee shop, a young woman leaving gave me a beaming

smile. I smiled back, but said nothing, wondering who she was. Why didn't I ask? I guess I was just surprised, and it happened quickly.

Tomorrow is Easter. I'll be spending the day at my sister's in Puyallup. I don't look forward to these days. It's a long trip out there and back, and while I'm there, her husband isn't very fond of me. I guess he has a strong work ethic, and can't stand seeing me unemployed. He tends to think of me as worthless. I can take it, but the whole day isn't very pleasant.

I'll be seeing Dad tomorrow. I doubt he'll recognize me, even after I tell him who I am. He doesn't recognize any of his family right now, except Barb. At times, he isn't even sure he's married to her.

Sunday, 4/16/2017

I finally saw Dad today. He's getting very frail. He wasn't eating enough before, but somehow he concluded he had gained weight and needed to diet. It was about 1:00 PM, and both he and Barb were in bed. Apparently, they always go to bed after lunchtime, regardless of whether they eat. Barb was asleep, having a bad dream, but we couldn't wake her. I pecked her on the cheek and told her I love her. She smiled for a moment, then went back into her trance.

Dad seemed happy to see us. Or maybe just glad to have company. I couldn't tell if he knew who I was. We held hands for a long time, and he clutched firmly. We chatted for a while, not about anything important, but he seemed fairly alert. More so than I expected. Joe stood back, maybe a little uncomfortable or reluctant. There was candy on the table. Apparently the staff had dropped it by. Lori gave Dad a chocolate kiss, and he enjoyed devouring it. Now to get him enjoying his meals the same way.

It was a pleasant visit. The place is nice. There's a courtyard with benches and tables. They have artists and performers visit frequently. Dad even says the food is good, although a little bland. They have to make a lot of older people happy, and some just don't care for savory foods. It's a hard adjustment for those two to make; they used to eat out at fine restaurants two or three times a week.

Wednesday, 4/19/2017

I've been feeling a burst of confidence recently. The weekend picked me up. I'm doing and saying things I would usually be too reluctant to do. There was a cute new caretaker on the elevator yesterday. We exchanged smiles, but didn't talk. When I got home, I thought damn, wouldn't it be nice to meet her. She was doing laundry at the time, and it occurred to me I'm out of clean socks. Good a reason as any to go downstairs. We talked a little bit. She's from Samoa or South Sudan, I didn't quite get which. I got her name as Natty, but I don't think that's right. Very nice woman, and I'm sure I'll see her again soon.

I'm getting a real good feeling from Jessie at the Coffee Tree. She calls out to me when I enter the door, loves to chat. But maybe she's just that way with everybody. I want to ask her out for a drink, but haven't found the opportunity. I have to make that opportunity myself. This is as good a time for it as ever.

There's a one hour orientation at the food bank tomorrow, then I start work Friday. It sounds easy: I'm sure it's pretty laid back, and only one day a week. It's volunteer, so the work can't be very hard, just the part of squeezing into a new social situation concerns me. Not isolating, keeping a chipper surface, those can be a challenge. It'll be a test.

Friday, 4/21/2017

I came home from the food bank yesterday, and a maintenance worker was repairing my range. There was no sound on the computer. I didn't know what the fuck was going on. I didn't think to ask him what he had done, I just started typing away, trying to figure out what the problem was. It appeared to be hardware. I thought I was going to have to switch to the cheap factory speakers or my boom box for a while. This was a sobering feeling. The music is very important to me.

This went for an hour or so, long after the guy had left, when I finally realized the jerk had turned off the power for the sound system. What does he think he's doing, pushing buttons on somebody else's desk, probably just guessing. I'm wondering what else he might have done, like opening drawers and snooping. I'm thinking of reporting this.

The orientation went OK, but the supervisor seemed to keep her eyes on me the whole time, like I might be a thief or a drug addict. I sat directly across from her, but still, there were other people in the room. I hope this isn't a sign of things to come.

I sent an inquiry to Social Security last week, and haven't heard back from them. I'm trying to confirm information Alan gave me about the trust account. Now I have a feeling they might screw me. If they know that I'm about to receive a windfall, will they track me and put a mark on my file? Would they look for a reason to remove me? Just running through my mind, has been for days. Maybe a phone call would have been a better way to go, and less detail.

Saturday, 4/22/2017

40 years ago, I was in Echo Glen detention facility for assault and incorrigibility. I was in the system for three or four years. I made friends there, which was unusual for me, and met a special young lady I'll never forget. I dated April Beachem for the last six months I was at the facility, and we were very close. I really loved her, and it was a kind of relationship I haven't had since. I was released to a foster home, and had all kinds of problems with people outside. I missed April and I missed echo Glen.

I was harassed and bullied, and didn't make it easier for myself with my anger and despair. I had no street smarts, either. I ended up at a special school for kids released from the juvenile reform system, and continued to struggle. When April was released, I was scared and frazzled, and rejected her. I sometimes wonder how much different my life would have been if I'd stayed with her.

Today I was wondering again, more intensely with nothing else to do, and I decided to try and find out what happened to her. She died in 2008, at the age of 48. The obituaries don't indicate how this happened. I've contacted a woman named Sawante Beachem, who appears to be her daughter, and hope to find out what kind of life she lived, and how she died so young. She had a very positive outlook on life, and a good sense of humor. I suspect she was happy. I hope she was,

Sunday, 4/23/2017

Well, that didn't last long. I started the week ready to light a fire, had a couple of small setbacks, then spent the weekend brooding about high school and a teen sweetheart. I can't dwell on the past, it just isn't very pleasant for me.

Monday, 4/24/2017

I first met April in the library at Echo Glen. It was her second or third day there. She was sitting on a bean bag chair, laughing and joking with some friends. She was funny and free spirited and struck me right away. I sat next to her and we talked for about five minutes, when I asked her to be my girlfriend. She was surprised, but said sure. It was just spontaneous. I've always been reserved and guarded, and don't remember anything like it before or since. She just had that effect on me.

Letting her go was the worst mistake I've made in my life. She was what I needed at the time, and I went into a tailspin after that. But I felt like I was under a microscope, and doomed to fail at anything I did. Maybe the early stages of schizophrenia.

I got a little bit of closure from Shawnte tonight. April died from lupus complications. I'd never heard of it before, but it can be very unpleasant and painful. There were only a three or four comments in her obituary. Not sure what to make of this. I told Shawnte a little bit of what April meant to me. Just telling somebody else is a relief. It was nobody's fault; the feeling of constant surveillance and fear of failure have always held me back. It seems like one should be easy to overcome, and the other would just go away with it. It's never been easy, though.

It isn't that I didn't take the initiative. When I went to college the first time, I loved math and physics, and I was going to take that path. I had stacks of books, studied hard, but I wasn't that good, getting a lot of "B"s. I still transferred, but drinking and mental illness cut that short. I went to doing labor jobs. I told

myself I'd work harder, faster than anybody else, and I did. But I had no social skills, and coworkers hated me. Supervisors were initially impressed, but I didn't fit in, and they got tired of me. Or I burned myself out. Whoever says working hard is the path to success is a liar.

I taught myself Python, and decided programming was the way to go. I got an associates degree, but had to compete with people who had bachelor's or master's degrees. Then the University stopped accrediting the program, so I was stuck with what I had. I wasn't excited about two more years of school, anyway. I worked at the college for eleven years in a different capacity. That's a long time, but it deteriorated until they had had enough of me.

I don't think of myself as a failure. I've overcome a lot of things. But I don't have much to show for 55 years. By the things that measure success in this society, I'm a profound failure. Fuck capitalism.

I'm rambling. But they say the cure for fear of failure is to take the first step, take a chance. I plunged in. It didn't get me far.

Tuesday, 4/25/2017

It occurred to me today, I've been sober for over 25 years. December, 1991. I don't remember what the day was, so it just passed by uneventfully. I thought of it when I saw Robert Pirsig had died today, and I read *Zen and the Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance* in the first few months. It was required for a philosophy class. I enjoyed it, but my head was in a cloud, and I didn't grasp it fully. It would be interesting to read now. I probably still have that copy.

Sunday, 5/07/2017

Friday was a went badly at the food bank. It's had me thinking about quitting already. I need to break that attitude if I'm going to get anyplace. I won't go far if I give up after one bad day.

Jeff is at Mom's now. He's probably struggling, but he isn't showing it if he is. There's no alcohol in the house, and I don't think he's smoking there, either. He asked Lori to bring him $20, and she thinks this might be an alarm. I'm not so sure. He needs cash, and Mom probably won't give that to him at this time, fearing he'll use it for alcohol. He needs money to get around, make appointments and look for work. I'd lend it to him, but I'm borrowing heavily myself.

Barb can't live much longer as she is. She's sleeping 24x7, getting up to eat a few times a day but going right back to bed afterward. She doesn't seem to have any desire to continue. I've done some looking around for geriatric psychologists. I imagine there are a few, and that they've seen people in this situation before. I can only find psychiatrists. All they do is prescribe meds, and her doctors have already made adjustments there. She needs to talk to somebody. People are

reaching out to her, but she doesn't listen to them, even her own daughter Cyndy. She just doesn't care.

Thursday, 5/11/2017

I'm getting anxious. Worrying that the check won't come through, although I can't think of any reason it wouldn't. As it comes closer, it's hard to think about anything else.

Dad didn't sound good yesterday. They think he might be having a stroke, and he's in the hospital this morning. I'm waiting to hear back from Lori. It's been a few hours since she contacted everybody. It can take to determine if it's a stroke. He was in a similar condition a few years ago, and spent the entire day getting diagnosed. They weren't even 100% certain.

Mom told me Jeff went out for a long walk yesterday. I hope that's what he did, but it doesn't sound like him. Hopefully, he's making a change, and this would be a very good sign. I just wonder, though, if he wasn't up to something else.

Friday, 5/12/2017

Dad's close to the end. He may die any day now. I saw him at the hospital yesterday and it wasn't good. He seemed to hear most of what we were saying, and that was good, but he struggled to say anything coherently. He couldn't open his eyes. His eyelids were strangely stretched, maybe struggling to open them. I had a few minutes alone with him and apologized for some of the things I've done to him. I did some terrible things growing up. I didn't get his response, but he seemed to be okay with it. I've apologized to him before, and we're both at peace with it.

Barb's going to a hospice. She's just not responding now. She even sleeps in the shower. She probably hasn't even noticed Dad is away. This can't continue much longer, and pretty soon they'll both be gone.

My favorite barista is leaving. Today's her last day, and she'll be managing another store beginning next week. She's the dance instructor with the reddish blonde hair. We've been very friendly, and chat a lot when she isn't busy. I've been putting off asking her for her number, and won't have another chance after today. She was just arriving when I came this morning, and didn't even look my way. I said hello, but she didn't return the gesture. She hurried between the back and the front. I've gotta go back later, when it's slower and she's had her coffee.

Saturday, 5/13/2017

Dad's on morphine now and resting at the care center. They're trying to make it as comfortable for him as possible. I'd like to visit him one more time, but he wouldn't even know I was there. I've asked Lori if she plans to go tomorrow. It's Mother's Day, and will be a long one. I thought I might meet Lori on her way to

the care center, and see Mom later. Everyone else is planning to be at Nicole's at 11. To catch a ride, I have to be out of here by 8:30. They don't understand why I don't spend more time with them. They're too damn far out of town.

Sunday, 5/14/2017

Lori called this afternoon to tell me Barb has passed away. I didn't really know what to say, and we kept getting disconnected, so we'll talk later. She was asleep and seemed to go out peacefully. The funeral plans for both of them are caskets to be buried on Scenic Hill in Kent, the neighborhood they both lived in for close to half a century. I don't have pleasant memories there, but that isn't important here. They'll have their wishes.

Dad's just hanging on. The morphine has him out of it. But he seems peaceful too, from what Lori tells me. I'd like to see him one more time, but I don't know what I'd do when I got there. He wouldn't know I was there. We couldn't talk. It would just be one last chance to see him alive.

I'm getting careless. I'm not writing my appointments down. I seem to have one in the next couple of days, but I don't know the day or time. I usually log them on my calendar right away, but I haven't been doing that. I only know because I got an annoying robocall on my voicemail from UW. I deleted it without listening. Ah, Dr. Ries. I think I'm scheduled to see him on Tuesday.

I went to Nicole's this morning, and it ended up being a long day. I spent two hours at the actual brunch, over fours traveling to Orting and back. Everybody keeps moving farther and farther out of town. My sister has hinted that I might enjoy living in Puyallup, but I don't feel comfortable in a small, conservative town, and transit out there is terrible, anyway.

Monday, 5/15/2017

I'm trying to plan out the trip to the rest home, and it's a pain. Transit sucks down there. This is one time I wish I had a car. I've lived in this city for nearly 30 years and rarely had use for one. But it's times like this it would be nice. People in Pierce County don't value transit very much. They reject every expansion and even emergency funding to keep the system rolling when the recession hit. It's bare bones now.

Lori doesn't recommend going to see Dad, and at this point, there's little that could be accomplished by it. We couldn't talk. He wouldn't even know I was there. He's just doped out on the morphine. It seems like a sad way to go out, but at least he isn't in pain.

Lori called right after I wrote this. She was with Dad, and put me on conference call to speak to him. I was taken by surprise, but told him I love him and thanked him for all of the great things he's done for me. I hope the best for him. It was

short, I couldn't think of much else to say. I've apologized to him before, and he's put it behind us. Maybe this is all I need now.

Tuesday, 5/16/2017

Dad passed away at about 12:45 PM. It's been coming for a while, so I'm not overcome by it. Lori had a cry when she told me on the phone. This has been very stressful for her. I've offered to help out many times, but she either doesn't have confidence in me to carry tasks out, or feels location would be a problem. I told her again tonight I want to have a role in this, but it sounds like everything is being taken care of already. Lori and Cyndy are handling the funeral; Joe and Jeff B. will be meeting with the lawyer. Jeff C. and I are out of the loop. It's been like this for a while.

I'll miss his sense of humor. He always knew when to laugh. Other people don't get my jokes. Too dry or sarcastic. He always picked it up and laughed with me. I don't joke very much anymore, and probably will do so less now.

Wednesday, 5/17/2017

The settlement checks are scheduled to be mailed out Monday. I'll have about a month to make purchases and put the balance in the trust fund. Write a check to Mom, too, covering at least what I've borrowed from her over the last two years.

I read today that families with six-figure incomes now qualify for subsidized housing in San Francisco. There are some pricey condos in this neighborhood, but it would be strange to live in the same building with professional and tech types. I'm just used to living around people who struggle to get by like myself. I remember years ago there was talk about renting some units at market price, bringing a more diverse economic community (and more money for SHA). This didn't go over well with the residents, and was scrapped.

Thursday, 5/25/2017

I'm very anxious this morning. Local mail delivery sometimes takes two days, sometimes three, and sometimes the delivery person drops it in the box at 9AM, but usually not until 3:00. So if the check's coming, it should be here today. I'm having fears that it won't come after all; I never got any confirmation. It would seem like they would send one. But there was a second and a third contact for people who didn't initially respond, and I never saw that, so it would seem my form got through. I made a first attempt at calling the law office, just to ease my fears. I got a recorded message. I hate this suspense.

I had a dream this week that's been lingering on my mind. I was waiting for somebody in a parking lot at a department store at night. I was away from the entrance, there were no lights or windows. A small dog started yipping at me. I knelt down to invite it over. As I reached to pet it, somebody passing by warned me that the dog didn't look very friendly. I woke up, and immediately had

thoughts about hanging myself. It lasted for about a minute. I was groggy at first, but it became more and more clear. I've had thoughts of suicide before, but this was strange. I don't know what the dog symbolized, or who I was waiting for. I'll have to talk to somebody about it, maybe Kiera.

Saturday, 5/27/2017

The check cam on Thursday. I'm happy, but now I have to wait a little longer. It's going to be a long week. A letter from the housing authority was also in the mail. They've scheduled me for a rent review next month. Living in subsidized housing is very intrusive; there are the inspections, and this, where they probe your income and resources. I'm required to provide a bank statement, and this is sometimes issued to me on the 2nd or 3rd, and sometimes as late as the 7th. I wondered if I was going to have to wait even longer; if they saw $30,000 in my checking account, my rent would skyrocket. I could try to explain that it will be in a trust fund, and can't go toward the rent. But I suspect they would be rigid, and base it on that statement. I called the credit union to find out what determines the scheduling of the statement. They said my cycle ends on the first Friday of the month, and that falls on the 2nd this time.

One of the first things I want to do is repay my loans from Mom. I've borrowed over $3,000 from her over the last four or five years, and can easily repay this now. I don't know what I would have done without her help. I've also made an offer to Nicole to help start a college fund for Madison. She didn't light up immediately, but I can't imagine she wouldn't take it up.

Sunday, 5/28/2017

The very next day after getting the check, there was a letter from Social Security in my mailbox. I usually only hear from them at the end of the year, so I started asking myself "how the hell do they know about this?" It would really complicate things. Turned out it was a coincidence. It was about a return-to-work program.

Monday, 5/29/2017

I got yelled at and laughed at this morning. I was at the bus stop on my way to the store, and a guy approached me for a light. He was down-and-out, from his hair and his clothes I guessed he was homeless. I obliged. He then asked me if the food bank was open. I didn't know, didn't think it was on a holiday. He'd have to go there to check himself. It was only a couple blocks away. When he was about a half a block away, he hollered "why are you such an asshole?" He continued across the street and screamed "fuck you!" Didn't recognize the guy, although he may have seen me at the food bank before, and thought I should know the answer to his question. He continued walking in that direction. I later saw a crowd getting off at the Cherry Street stop, and that's usually an indicator that it's open. He'd find out soon enough.

Checking out at the grocery store, I wanted to make a conversation with the cashier. She was being very friendly, and I just wanted to be acknowledge. Nothing came to my mind, so I stayed quiet. An older woman and her spouse were right behind me. They were watching me and she was laughing. I looked and said nothing. I don't have a clue what they found amusing, but I wish I'd asked.

Thursday, 6/01/2017

I'm spooked. A voice came up on the speaker saying "didn't catch that." I was opening a radio station on the web, but the stream hadn't started yet. I don't have voice enabled as far as I know. I can't find the settings now. I've gone offline, don't know how long it will be. Maybe it was on their end, the station, I don't know. There couldn't be a worse time for this to happen. All of my banking I online.

I don't know if it's related, but this document was very slow in launching. Usually takes a second or two, this time it was a few minutes.

Friday, 6/02/2017

I plan to deposit my check tomorrow, and I'm full of worries. Mom isn't helping, she keeps questioning every step I take. I'll just go forward, let things fall as they may.

Saturday, 6/03/2017

What could go wrong? My debit card is blocked tonight, at least that's what it seems. I made a large deposit this morning, then made some large purchases, and my account is flagged. At least I hope that's the case. One machine indicated an incorrect PIN. The other didn't give any useful information, just that the transaction failed. I'm worried that my PIN has been changed, and someone has a clone of my card. I haven't heard of it happening that way, but I'm going to sweat this all weekend, until the bank opens Monday. They don't have phone support on weekends.

Sunday, 6/04/2017

This is getting a little scary. I couldn't even make an inquiry on the ATM this morning. No explanation. I saw worried looks on Capitol Hill, as if everybody else knows what's going on, but won't tell me. There's nothing unusual on the website, no notices, but the purchases I made yesterday are still pending. I should be celebrating, but I only have $20 in my pocket, and don't have any desire to go out right now.

Monday, 6/05/2017

I called the credit union, and it was what I suspected, but wow, I couldn't be 100% sure, and not notifying is inexcusable. I filed a complaint. The issue with my account was resolved over the phone. I just had to confirm that I had made the purchases.

I went to the coffee shop this morning and ended up at the same table with the security guard from the food bank. We chatted, or he did. I just wanted to listen to music and read the headlines on my phone, watch people walking by. It's very pleasant in the morning. I sat captivated, not really grasping most of what he said. He went on about the FB, and handling people in line. I barely got a word in. I started drinking my coffee faster, and we both left when I was done. Now I'm kind of confined, waiting for a package delivery. I have a set routine in the morning, and feel a little off key.

Wednesday, 6/07/2017

Damn, I have a brand new phone and somebody's already inside of it. One of the main reasons I upgraded was music playback, but that was sketchy yesterday. This morning, the camera was on as it sat on the desk. I might have inadvertently tapped it. That's happened many times before, especially carrying them in my pants pocket. I have been opening a lot of apps accidentally, getting the feel for the new phone. I haven't been reading the permissions carefully, but no apps installed right now would exhibit this behavior. They're all pretty mainstream, from trusted sources. There was a messaging app I thought was the one I used previously, but was very different. I removed it last night.

Thursday, 6/08/2017

There are two memorials for Dad this weekend. Tomorrow they're putting his ashes away in a wall, a time capsule, or whatever it is they do. There will be a public memorial Saturday. I don't have anything to add to either of these. I was going to put a letter in his capsule. He sent me a copy of letter once to show me he was active in community mental health in Kent. He was proud of this and wanted me to know. Unfortunately, I've since written some equations on the back of it, making it inappropriate. I don't have anything to say, and I panic when I get on a podium, so I'll just be observing Saturday. We became close after I turned forty, and was living a somewhat stable life. But I don't have anything to show for all those years. Just happy memories.

I have the urge to call him from time to time. Towards the end, there was almost no point in that, other than to let him know that I was there for him. I even miss those calls now. It was nice to know he was still there, too.

I'm having lunch with Lori tomorrow. She chose the date, but it's probably bad timing. There won't be much to talk about except the memorial. I wanted to treat her for a change, and have a good talk. It won't be the happy occasion I'd hoped.

Saturday, 6/10/2017

It was pretty awkward today. I spent the first half of the memorial wandering alone, not seeing anybody I knew or at least recognized. There were about 200 people there, and I seemed to be alone. At one point I sat at a table with family, but they soon got up, leaving me in a spot. I eventually went to the back by myself, looking around and isolating. Lori noticed and pointed me toward Ed Burgi, a friend in school whom I hadn't seen in 40 years. We chatted a little, him telling me about his life in a nutshell. I could have told him a lot, but I just don't usually talk about my past to anyone. I'm not ashamed of it, but there have been a lot of bad times that I'd rather discuss with a therapist, not a casual acquaintance.

People went to the podium to tell stories about Dad and Barb. I noticed Barb's kids all took the mike, as did Lori, but my brothers and I were silent. Somebody described Dad as a quiet man. I was surprised to hear this, he was always talking when I was around him. Maybe this was just around us, but we've taken his reserved side.

I left after people were done speaking. I didn't stick around for lunch. I didn't sleep last night, and I wasn't really enjoying the occasion. Lori and Cyndy did a great job making it happen, but I felt tired and wasn't having fun.

Wednesday, 6/14/2017

I had lunch with Joe today. It went well. We talked a lot, mostly about family. He has me wondering about some of the moves Lori made in Dad's final months. I didn't necessarily disagree with her, I trusted her completely. But I was getting different messages from Dad. The church, for example. Lori told me he was always complaining, saying he hated the place and didn't want to go back there. When I spoke to him, he was gushing about the place and the pastor. He seemed to love it. Lori and Cyndy made some changes to their last wishes, arguing that they were ill and would appreciate a memorial more than a funeral, for example. The memorial went well, and no doubt they would have loved it, but it seems odd, now.

Joe knows better than I do what's going on in the business side of this. Their investments tanked in the early 2000s. I hadn't understood why they wouldn't retire and enjoy life, while they still could. This was the reason. I wonder why Dad never mentioned it to me?

My step brother Don will be executing the estate. I don't know if I trust him. We've never gotten along. He's just never liked me, going all the way back to playing basketball in 6th grade. He's a businessman. I don't know if I should be reassured by that or not. It might not matter. With the costly care, and the late collapse of their investments, there probably isn't very much to quibble about.

We talked about Jeff. His inability to take positive steps, putting up barriers for himself, not following through on things. I think it's depression, and Joe seems to

agree. We're both glad to see he's getting mental help right now, but we'll see how far he goes with that. He respects Joe a lot, and Joe said he'll try to talk to him more, now that the load of managing Dad and Barb's legal matters is off his back.

Somebody honked at me on the way downtown. He yelled something like "turn that off!" in a bitter tone. There were others around, but I'm sure he was talking to me, in reference to my ear buds. I ignored him, but it reminded me that they're watching me, and need to be careful what I do.

Sunday, 6/18/2017

It's the first Fathers' Day since Dad passed, and it just seems like any other Sunday. It's quiet. I've been in most of the day, as I usually am. We didn't spend this occasion together very often. I don't really have any memories of Fathers' Day. I would usually just give him a call, wish him the best, and tell him I love him. It would be nice to talk to him today, but I don't feel an urge. I miss him, but I know he's gone, and he was in decline for some years. I don't hold out hope for afterlife, but he needed to be put to rest.

Thursday, 6/22/2017

The windfall is getting more complicated than I thought it would be. I have to get to SSA as soon as possible to report that, and the trust fund. Receipts, canceled checks. I'd hoped that if it was gone within a month, Social Security would have no concern. That's turned out to be very wrong.

Friday, 6/23/2017

I didn't have anything to be concerned with to begin with. I had been receiving SSI at one time, but it's now SS**D**I. This has changed more than once. With the latter, there's no resource limit, and I could have kept the $30,000 in the bank all along. Now it's in a trust fund, and my access to it will be limited, and there will be fees deducted. It's still nice to have.

I spoke with the fund manager yesterday, and something interesting she told me was that the fund can only pay for things I buy or do for myself; if I want to take someone to a show, my ticket can be paid through the fund, but I'll have to pay the other one out of pocket. Further complicating this is the tickets will have to be purchased separately. Getting both at the same table would be problematic. Generally, they can't give me cash or a card to buy something. They or a third party must pay, and whomever does will be reimbursed.

I got a letter from the law firm handling the estate today. It will be distributed evenly among their children. I doubt there will be very much on hand; it seems they lost a lot towards the end. I'm just learning this now. I guess things started to go bad in the last ten years, but Dad never gave me any indication of this. He liked to show me some of the properties he owned, and I always assumed he and

Barb had a nice nest egg from their success in real estate. I knew he should have retired earlier, and I urged him to, but I guess he couldn't. Then there were problems in the office at the agency he'd worked for 25 – 30 years. He moved to a different company, and things were no better. He was in decline, and then there was Barb's stroke. He kept saying he was going to return to work, He said that almost to his death.

Sunday, 6/25/2017

It's been a good day. It was over 90º this afternoon, but I have an AC. It was pretty quiet for the most part, until I went downstairs to wash a shirt. It was a brand new one, white, and I splattered sauce on it at the Wild Ginger the first time I wore it. I thought it would be permanent. There were three of us aboard when we got to the lobby. A woman with a big cart said she was getting on now, and ordered people to move. There's a lack of elevator etiquette in this building, and when there's only one working, it can be very frustrating. One guy was standing against the wall, and she chided him for taking too much room. It escalated. We all got off on the first floor, while she remained to go up to 8.

The shirt was clean. That was a nice surprise. I have a lot of stained shirts, it would be nice to keep them clean for a little while. I put it in the dryer and went back upstairs.

That woman was on the elevator again, with another cart. She's new, and this isn't a very pleasant day to be moving. I'm sure she's hot and tired. But she began complaining to me about the guy on the wall. I asked her why she couldn't wait for the elevator to come back, and mentioned that the guy wasn't in anybody's way. I should have been quiet, but I was upset with her, too. Now she was angry at me. She said she wouldn't apologize to me, and I said I'm not the one she needs to apologize to.

I saw her a third time when I went downstairs to drop off some mail. She was really hissy-fit now. She again chose to go downstairs first. As soon as that door closed, the other one opened. It had broken down Friday and hadn't gone anywhere all weekend. What the hell, I got on and went straight to the 17th floor. Some kind of karma? It was a nice surprise. That, the shirt, and staying cool on a hot day have me feeling pretty good.

Tuesday, 6/27/2017

Recent events, including money and losing Dad, have left me feeling stressed and smoking more than before. That's having a physical toll; I'm coughing and hacking, and getting a wheeze when I lay down. This should be a signal to stop right now, but I'm just going to try cutting back to the level I was at before.

I made the first purchase against the trust fund. Or at least requested it. I listed a new air conditioner and headphones on Amazon, and forwarded that to Kate,

the manager of the fund. It's up to her to approve it and make the actual purchase. It's my money, but it isn't in my hands.
I've reported the fund to SSA, SHA and DSHS. I shouldn't have to go any further. I'll be hearing back from them, but from what they tell me, there should be no change in my status. I'll still have a source of income, as well as medical coverage. That can change at any time with the political climate, but I can sleep for now.

Thursday, 6/29/2017

I went to a concert last night. It was spontaneous, something unusual for me. I saw Sonny Landreth was in town, and immediately bought a ticket. This was out of pocket. I can't afford to do it this way, but I'm glad I did. Although, I had the feeling the waitress was playing games with me, taking advantage. When my dinner was the last to arrive, even though the two men next to me ordered the same dish, I started to think I was being shorted. I over-tipped her. I couldn't read the check, and paid a few dollars more as a result.

Now I'm trying to blog about the show. It was very good, and I've started the post, but by the time I finish, it will be too late for the coming show. I just get a blank.

Saturday, 7/15/2017

It's been a while since I've written. Not much going on or anything to pour out about. I'm bored, really. Doing the same things again and again. Going to concerts will help break this. There are some free ones coming up, and I have funds available, at least for my own fare. Bringing somebody along will cost me.

Wednesday, 7/19/2017

Hectic morning. AM is usually pretty leisurely for me, but somehow I ended up with back-to-back appointments at the clinic today. I woke at 8:30, and the first was at 9:30. I went out right away so I'd have time to get a coffee. I was groggy and confused. The barista wished me a nice day, but I heard it as something different and said "that's OK." Somewhere along the way, I lost $20. The pockets on the shorts I'm wearing are very tight, and things will slip out very easily.

I don't usually gain anything from talking to Dr. Ries. He just asks how I'm doing, and if the meds are working. This morning, I mentioned the events of the last couple of months, and he seemed to listen, but the subject changed to smoking. The hacking has been terrible, although it wasn't present in the session. He gave me some rah rah, you can do it pep talk. At least he made me think about it.

I went to an interesting show last night, a young singer/songwriter performing and discussing her work with the audience. She's good. I have her album, and wanted to see her live, and ask questions. I was silent through the whole hour. Nothing came to me. There were five or six others, including Joe, all

participating. I just awkwardly sat and listened. Happens to me all too often. Kiera thinks I should go again. If I'm just going to blend into the wall, I don't see any reason to.

Friday, 7/21/2017

With Dad's illness, I thought I'd finally been getting close to Lori. She called me for support, we had long conversations, and talked frequently. Since his death, we seem to be drifting apart again. She doesn't answer my messages. She gave me a cool reception at Nicole's house warming. On a couple of occasions, I've reached out to hug her, and she's stepped away. Gary wouldn't even shake my hand that day. He's never thought much of me, but I wonder what they're saying about me right now. I haven't been very close to family since my mental breakdown at 13. That seemed to be changing. I guess it really hasn't.

I'm thinking about skipping the food bank today. The chatter really wears on me. There's a loud fan creating a constant white noise, making it hard to hear what they're saying. I fill it in, and don't like what I hear. It doesn't seem like they appreciate my service.

Wednesday, 7/26/2017

I went to the Jazz Alley to see Janiva Magness last night. She's a favorite of mine. The music was great, but it was awkward being the only one alone in the audience. I was coughing all night, too. I really have to give up the smoking. Dinner was paid, but I left a tip, not knowing if Kate included that. I'm glad I went, and there will be more shows to come. I have a ticket to see Tedeschi Trucks Band in November, and I'm sure there will be others in between. It would be nice to bring somebody along.

The coughing and hacking are getting pretty bad. I worry I may have lung disease, and keep thinking this will be my last. I then run out and buy two more packs without giving it a thought. I've tried to make an appointment with my doctor, but she has a waiting list. Alcohol wasn't hard to give up. I had no desire to drink after I decided to quit. I never missed it. Cigarettes are different. They're more ingrained in my lifestyle. I'll light one up after I write this. When I get bored later. Before I go to bed. They're ubiquitous, and there's no substitution for them, even vaping. I've tried that.

Monday, 7/31/2017

I was outside smoking a little while ago, and a woman walked by with a t-shirt with "NO" in big letters. I smiled and said hi. She sneered and went on her way. People seem to be trying to send me a message. I'm not getting it. They're wasting their time with me.

Seizures have been coming pretty hard this month. It's been a long time. It seems like it's been over a year since they've come in clusters. The meds I'm

taking have done pretty well until recently. Friday, I was on my way to the food bank, and suddenly found myself on the floor, not knowing where I was or what to do. I just rode on it for a minute, when somebody else stepped on. I don't know who it was, but he asked me if I wanted to go to the first floor. I said no, but didn't know where I was going. Eventually I got back to my apartment, and remembered why I was going out. I went back, and made it through the shift, but wasn't very respondent while there. I had plans this weekend, but was too tired and groggy to go out.

Social Security is still probing my case. Now they want details on the legal case. I sent a copy of the court papers this morning. If that doesn't satisfy them, I gave them the phone number for the law firm. This might take a while, but I can't see a reason they would cut back my benefits. I don't really have more money in the bank than before. I wonder what's going to happen when I get my inheritance from Dad and Barb's estate.

Friday, 8/04/2017

I finally had a dental appointment today. I'll have two teeth pulled. It could have been much worse. I've been neglecting it for a while, and haven't seen a dentist in several years. They want to charge $260 for extracting each tooth! Others I've talked to have had this done for free. The total will be $3800. I wonder if they're taking advantage of my situation. An insurance agency would probably negotiate and pay far less. I'll have to talk to Kate and see what I can do to bring the price down.

The shift at the food bank started well, but after a while I began feeling isolated. I greeted people as they signed in. One guy told me he didn't care what people say about me. I'm not sure what he meant. What who's saying? What are they saying? Was he joking? I won't know, and it bothered me the rest of the day.

Monday, 8/07/2017

The building management posted a notice today: The elevators will be replaced beginning the 28th. There will only be one elevator operating for 12 months. This will be miserable. Long waits, overcrowded cars, leaving at least five minutes early to adjust for the delay. I get uncomfortable when there are more than four or five people riding in the same car. There will often be ten or more with one car. Going out for a cigarette ends up taking 20 minutes. I've had to tolerate this for as long as a week before, maybe ten days. A year of it will push me to the edge.

The building was originally designed for three elevators. They decided to cut costs, figuring two would be sufficient. It is, if they're both working. They must have assumed both would always be working, or that being down to one for a day would be a minor inconvenience.

Tuesday, 8/08/2017

Another one vanishes into the night. I haven't seen the young woman down the hall for weeks. I'm not sure exactly how long it's been. But we talked every day, for a year or two, and then suddenly she was gone. I only realized it this morning. I don't notice these things, at least for a while. Not for weeks or sometimes months. Then it dawns on me, "what happened to…?" She must have left late at night, because I haven't seen anybody moving in or out in that time. Maybe she just had little to move. Some people here are minimalists, or just don't accumulate things like I do. It's one reason I've been here so long; I dread the thought of transferring everything I have, furniture, bed, desk, computers… Some move frequently, and like to travel light, or just can't afford nice things.

She wasn't talking as much towards the end, at least to me. She had a boyfriend, and was spending a lot of time with him. He got along well with her child. I imagine she moved in with him. I wish her the best. It drives me crazy when this happens. No good bye, just gone.

Thursday, 8/10/2017

Traffic is way up on the website. Not nearly enough to make money, but it's nice to see. I'm writing more about live events, and that seems to be drawing interest. My writing's been a little better, too. The blog gives me some purpose, so it really feels good to see what's going on.

Sunday, 8/13/2017

There's a lot going on tonight. Free concerts, a march downtown. I was on my way to the waterfront to see a show there, but the bus was late, and I became more and more reluctant to go as I waited. The bus was eventually ten minutes late. I didn't hang around that long.

I went to the show after writing this. The first band were already removing their equipment, so I wandered around, and stayed for half the second show. They were good. The front person has won many awards, and they're pretty tight. I just didn't feel like staying late. The sax player watched me get up, and looked at me with a sad face, like I wasn't enjoying the night. I was, but feel a little guilty now.

Monday, 8/14/2017

There are bed bugs in my apartment. So far, I've only seen them in bed. Creepy. My unit was inspected as soon as they showed up in a neighbor's unit recently, and it was clean. I'm suspecting somebody planted them. Maybe the person who knocks on my door at night. I'll throw my bedding out today, and they're going to tell me I'll have to throw other things out, like clothing. I don't know if I'll go that far.

Lori finally responded to me the other day. There is a string of orphaned text messages on my phone, and I gave up trying to contact her that way. I've been called her several times, and there was no answer. No response to voice mail, either. Then she finally answered a message Friday, only to say she was tired and was going to bed. It was 7:30 PM. I don't know why she's cutting me off. Dad and Barb are gone, and Mom is over 80 years old. We might be ending ties completely before long.

People seem mad at me this morning. I keep getting angry looks, mostly from those I don't know. I can't think of anything I've done over the weekend to trigger this, but I've always been clueless how my actions are received by others. Goes way back to 6th grade, when I was verbally bullying people, not intending to hurt anybody, but thinking I was funny. I really didn't understand when they started to fight back. It didn't occur to me til I was 30, talking to a shrink for an evaluation, what I'd been doing at the time. Except for the concert, and lunch with Mom, I didn't do anything out of my usual routine. Maybe they're mad that I went to the show instead of the march. I've been silent on the fascist rally, where I'm usually outspoken on social media. Nothing else makes sense.

Tuesday, 8/15/2017

There's a woman at the office next door who's avoiding me, even so much as looking at me. I see her in the morning from time to time when I'm out for a cigarette, and she turns away from me, with a nervous and kind of creeped look. I've only spoken to her once, on the elevator. I hoped that would melt the ice. It was about the proposed changes on the 3 and 4 routes. I don't like the new route, and she seemed to agree with my reasoning, Or maybe she was just being polite. In any case, it was pretty benign. She's friendly with others. Just not me.

I'm sleeping better on the couch than I do in bed. I've been doing it recently to be near the fans and AC, and now the bed bugs. It doesn't make sense; I can't stretch my legs out, my head is elevated in a way that's bad for my neck. But I sleep soundly, not waking up at 3AM, and sleeping through to 8 or so. I feel rested. Go figure.

I was a jerk this morning. There was a guy at the door downstairs who was trying to get in for an appointment. I didn't quite understand what he was talking about, and pointed across the street to the medical center. People confuse the apts for a hospital wing all the time. It was only after I left that I realized what he was there for. I feel bad for not sticking around and trying to help him. I explained this to Rick next door a couple hours later, and he told me the guy made the appointment and there was nothing to worry about. Good to hear. I asked Rick to apologize for me next time he sees him.

People seem to be watching me and talking about me. Even if I just go out for a smoke, they see me, and say things. When I feel this way, I know some of it's in my head, a manifestation of psychotic symptoms. But it's also real. People *are*

watching, just maybe not as much as I sense. And I have to figure out a way to deal with it, in any case.

Friday, 8/18/2017

I just resigned from the food bank. I wasn't enjoying it much, skipping days toward the end, and needing to pursue other objectives. I don't know what that will be. I have to find a replacement for it, but the social setting was weighing on me, and anything I do will have a similar burden. Something like the food bank might be a way to learn to cope with this, but it hasn't done this for me.

I have a schizophrenic relationship with my neighbors. Maybe that's to be expected for someone like me. About half are friendly and cordial. Some of the women even seem fond of me. The others can't stand me, and try to make it known. I'm sure they have their reasons. My personality has changed a lot through the years, but there are still things not to like, rubbing people the wrong way if they don't know me.

Monday, 8/21/2017

Hundreds of people are arriving at my blog, expecting a report on the blues challenge yesterday. I've been building it up for days, and now I could kick myself for not going. It's a long bus ride out to Snohomish, and it didn't even cross my mind to make the trip. I'll read the comments on Facebook, and try to gather up some video clips. Maybe I can finesse this.

The eclipse went past. People were talking because I was going to ignore it. When I decided to go back out with my camera, I felt unwelcome at my own home. The eclipse itself was no big deal; everybody was disappointed. I could have slept late this morning and not missed a thing.

Tuesday, 8/22/2017

There's been remodeling going on in recent months here, bringing apartments up to federal disability standards. It wasn't a big deal to me until this morning, when I learned from one of the workers that some people were refusing to leave. I'd assumed all this time they were doing the work as people moved out on their own; they're booting people out to do this! The woman in the office insists they're being "relocated," not evicted. They aren't moving on their own will, and some of them are resisting this. It sounds like an eviction to me. I'm a little nervous. She tells me it's only two bedroom apartments that are getting the makeover, not studios like mine. I don't see any reason that couldn't change at any time. This is a nice place, and anything else would be a sharp downgrade.

I've been removed from voc rehab. I never followed through. I was going to make an appointment with Holly a couple of weeks ago, but that never came about. I just don't know what I'd do. My skills are degraded, and I can't see myself doing something like washing dishes every day. I've had money on hand for a few

months, so the urgency is gone. I'm thinking of going back to the Millionaire Club soon, just to get in the groove. I have a dental appointment Monday, but I'm putting MC on my calendar Tuesday.

It's 8PM and I haven't eaten at all today. I've had no physical hunger or mental appetite. I'll eat a sandwich in a little bit. This used to happen when I worked at the college. Sometimes, working the evening shift, I wouldn't eat til after 10. My habits have slowly gotten better since.

There's a guy who keeps saying something something to me as I walk past him. I don't make out what it is, he just mumbles. I don't think I want to know. I've never met him, just know that he has some friends here. One of these times I'll stop and ask him, but he doesn't look like someone I want to mess with.

Wednesday, 8/23/2017

Damn, I'm getting unhappy looks from people like "I know what you did." I must have done something really bad in the last couple of days. Nothing I can think of that I can't live with. I'll just have to bear with this for a few more days.

Saturday, 8/26/2017

The reasons to quit smoking are starting to get overwhelming. The coughing is getting pretty bad. The money has always been a problem. The elevator is going out of service Monday, and this will mean wasting hours going out to smoke on some days. That's not an exaggeration. I have my computer set to lock after 15 minutes of inactivity. When there's one elevator, there's often a blank screen when I return.

Now some US senators are asking the FDA to ban menthol cigarettes. It's a race issue, cigarette companies targeting them at African-Americans. Maybe. But black adults make this choice, as I have. They seem to be implying that we can't make decisions on our own.

I was in the coffee shop the other day, and all of the tables were occupied. Two women were chatting at one table and I asked if they didn't mind if I sat there. It was fine with them. I turned away from them, and reading my phone, listening to music, not to interrupt them. One of them was very pretty, and I couldn't help glancing at her a few times. She didn't seem to be paying attention to me. I got up when I finished my coffee after 20, 30 minutes, and started to leave. I saw the woman was looking at me. She had a somber look on her face. I smiled, but she continued to give me the look. I continued to the door, but it's been nagging at me ever since. What was on her mind? Did I do something to upset her? I didn't think to walk over and ask, but that would have been awkward anyway. I would've liked to have met her, but I don't know that this would have been a good situation.

Tuesday, 8/29/2017

I've been thinking about a dream I had a few nights ago, trying to analyze it. There was a clock or timer on zero. Maybe I'm running out of time? Tapping it seemed to give me more time. Or the time piece was on an old style suitcase named "Betsy." Hard cover, locked, but I got inside. A young, old-fashioned woman? It seemed like it was set to go forward, but it wasn't moving. It had been damaged.

There was water on the ground. To reach Betsy, I had to get my feet wet first.

I was in some capacity for the HMSS of James Bond films. Maybe symbolic of my secrecy. I don't talk to others about myself much, other than therapists.

The other HMSS agents, all men, left when they had gotten what they wanted from Betsy. I was alone with her, and didn't know where to go next.

Wednesday, 8/30/2017

It's beginning to become clear what this bed bug extermination implies. I had cleared my bed and dressers. Those were the only things the guy mentioned when he visited my apartment. He came back a week later to spray, and told me it wasn't nearly ready. I need to bag *everything*, books, DVDs, desk has to be emptied… Somebody came by yesterday to see if I was ready. I'd been waiting for them to contact me on the new date. They were waiting for me. She told me, or I understood, I'll have to live this way for *3 months*. No. Absolutely not. That's no way to live. I have shelves filled to the wall that I'll never be able to clear. The entire floor would be covered! I'm seriously thinking about living with the bed bugs. That would be more tolerable.

Monday, 9/04/2017

My audience has dwindled on the blog. I don't know why traffic was so high last month, but it's back to where it was a couple months ago. No big hopes for now. Maybe the Summer music festivals were drawing interest.

I have until the 12th to prepare my apartment for extermination. That should be plenty of time. I have a lot of old junk in the closet that had a thick coat of dust, and won't be using any of it again. It might not be as bad as I thought. I can hang shirts instead of bagging them. It's really hard to find things with all of these bags scattered around right now. I'm going to leave the shelves by the entrance alone. There's too much "stuff," like books and boxes, that I couldn't possibly bag. It's in direct proximity to the kitchen, and they told me I can leave that alone.

Sunday, 9/10/2017

My funds are starting to dwindle. I still have the trust fund, but that isn't much help as my checking balance is getting low, and the trust fund won't cover that. I have less than $400 to get by for the rest of the month. That won't cover it.

I read too much into things. Two young women were ahead of me in line, and after making their order, I didn't hear much, but one was going to the restroom and the other said she would guard the door. I immediately took this to be in reference to me. Did they think I was some creep who would follow her in? The light was out, it seemed, and she left the door ajar. It makes a little more sense in that context. I just have a tendency to personalize everything.

Wednesday, 9/13/2017

I've been seeing a lot of old class photos from Kent on Facebook. It makes me a little uncomfortable; I have a lot of bad memories there. I dread seeing myself in one. I've never really gotten over those times.

I didn't used to think much of it when the death of somebody prominent hit the news. Everybody dies. It just doesn't seem very significant. But lately I've noticed people are dying at 60, 70, and here I am, at 55, sitting on my ass all day, smoking Kools and carrying a protruding waistline. My days are numbered. I've already had brushes with death. I've never wanted to be "old," but dying young isn't a desire, either.

Friday, 9/15/2017

The exterminator treated my apartment Tuesday and it looked like a war zone when I returned. Furniture was upended, the floor was filthy and the room is still reeking from the spray. I've never cleaned underneath the furniture. It's never occurred to me, and there's no room to move it, anyway. Or I thought there wasn't. Now he'll be returning in two weeks, and I'll be starting all over. I have to run all of my clothes through the dryer and rebag them, dump the queen size bed, mop the floor, and generally keep the place tidy. I feel paralyzed thinking about it. I know I have to stop thinking and just do it, but I can't get past being overwhelmed.

Wednesday, 9/20/2017

I've been pretty low this week. Always tired, no desire to go out and see people, fretting about money and about getting the apartment in order for the second treatment. I've just been doing that one step at a time, a couple of loads of clothes each night. There's still a week to go before the exterminator returns. But with the condition the apartment's in now, dirt and bags all over, and with a lot more to do, being here alone is bringing me down.

Saturday, 9/23/2017

I’m back to the pattern of waking up in the wee hours of the morning, about 3:00, and being tired the next day. I get up, light a cigarette, and start up my computer. It doesn’t occur to me to go back to sleep. There’s nothing going on in the news or social media, and not much of anything to do at all. I go back to bed after 30 minutes or so. I wake up 4 or 5 hours later, still tired, and never get enough energy during the day. I just have to back to sleep at night, but for some reason, I have a spurt and need to get up.

There’s been construction work on the roof across the street for a couple of weeks. They’re on my end of the building now, directly across from my window. I know they’re busy, but I keep wondering if they’re watching me. Every now and then there’s a lull, and heads seem to be turned this way. There isn’t much to see if they are, but I’m so used to the privacy here, I can’t get this off of my mind.

I’m back to borrowing money from Mom. It seems ridiculous that I can’t withdraw from the fund, but that’s how it is. I’ve repaid her for past loans, and will do so in the future when I can. But right now, I don’t have anyplace else to go.

Wednesday, 9/27/2017

I finally threw out the bed today. I ended up doing it by myself. The building staff aren’t allowed to do lifting, at least for residents, and I would be lucky to find somebody in physical condition to do it. Many here are disabled, and wouldn’t lift anything heavier than 20 pounds. I didn’t want to search around, anyway. The floor underneath is covered with filth. I’ll have to clean it tonight. I have another load to put in the laundry. With all this work, I’m wondering if it’s worth it.

I couldn’t sleep last night. For some reason, I was unable to swallow. My passage was blocked. I had to sit up. This made me anxious, and I was up until 3 or 4. This is something I’ll have to report to Caroline, if I can ever get an appointment with her. She’s been backlogged for months.

Jeff’s had a hip replacement. He’s living with Mom these days, who’s pretty much taking care of him, scheduling his appointments, driving him there, and doing all of his legwork. I don’t know what’s wrong with him, but he can’t take care of himself. He doesn’t seem to care. I guess I’ve been in a similar situation. Drinking and mental illness put me in a pretty helpless situation. But I maintained some independence. Jeff needs Mom to hold his hand and walk him through it.

Friday, 9/29/2017

I used to be very argumentative, always correcting people when I thought they were wrong. “Au, contraire,” as my rehab counselor put it years ago. I just couldn’t stand to see something plainly false go left unchallenged. This bothered some people, and hurt relationships. I still cringe when I hear others passing

misinformation, like this afternoon, when somebody told his theory of why the elevator door has been malfunctioning. Sometimes it isn't worth upsetting people.

I bought a $500 espresso machine. The $80 - $90 ones crap out within months. This one is built for heavy use. I drink 3 or 4 cappuccinos a day, and this will more than handle it. It's fast, and it doesn't make a mess. It also has a five year warranty. It's nice to have some luxuries. I've rarely had that in my life before.

Monday, 10/02/2017

I was really given a scare today. There was a post on the bulletin board, looking pretty routine, but for one line: "More cameras installed in the building and in units." In the units!?! That can't be legal, I thought. I went to the office as soon as I could, and emphatically told them they could not possibly do this, this would mean a lawsuit. Hell if I'm going to have a surveillance camera in my apartment. The manager assured me, this was just something that one of the residents had concocted at a meeting. There was no such plan. The other residents there overwhelmingly lambasted her proposal. But now I'm thinking about more cameras in general. Some residents have been talking about having them installed in the halls. I've never adapted to the cameras at the entrances. When I step out, I always think about being watched, by security or by residents who don't have anything better to do with their day than to watch the video on their TV all day. The woman across the hall does this. She's told me as much, commenting on how often she sees me go in and out for a smoke. Now they would be at my own door.

Friday, 10/06/2017

I've had about as much of this as I can take. The exterminator came for a third treatment today, and will be back for a fourth. I have bags all over the floor, and have started laying clothes on a chair. He inferred that I was piling dirty clothes and not doing my laundry. I can't put them in the drawers, if I put them in bags I can't find them later. There are several things I haven't seen in weeks, and I only have three pairs of underwear right now. There are still bed bugs here. I can't continue living like this. If the next treatment doesn't finish it, I'm going to have to start complaining to management.

Saturday, 10/7/2017

Coffee seems to make me think clearly. I was headed to Tukwilla to meet Mom and Joe for a birthday lunch. I arrived at the Pioneer Square tunnel station a few minutes ahead of the #150, or so I thought. There was a notice posted: The bus was detoured weekends for construction. It directed people to the edges of town. Angry, I walked to Jackson Street, and the bus was taking off when I was a block away. Now I was twice as mad. Swearing, I checked the app to see how soon the next one was coming. There wasn't a trace of it on the GPS. Metro didn't communicate the change to Sound Transit, or whoever maintains the system.

They’re usually 15 minutes apart, but I had no idea what it would be under the circumstances.

I waited about 20 minutes, and there was no sign of the bus. Now I was just too upset to wait any longer. I decided to go to Starbucks for a coffee, and at that point, I was going to cancel my plans. The #150 passed me going the other way after walking a block No, I wouldn’t run after it.

I sat down with a cup of java, and first called Mom to tell her what was happening, and that I wouldn’t make it. She was disappointed, and upset. But I think she understood. I apologized to her, but told her I was too angry to go out at that point. After talking to her I began to sip my drink, and thought for several minutes. I was calming down, and I knew this kind of thing is important to her. I called her back to tell her I’d be there. I took my coffee back to the bus stop; the #150 was leaving about a block ahead of me. I waited patiently this time. Other people had been waiting an hour for the #101, which was also detoured. Ridiculous.

I’m glad I went. We had a good time, the food was great. The bus arrived within five minutes on the way back. It turned out to be a nice day.

I was having chest pains tonight. Sharp pains on both sides. It lasted until I began massaging it. I don’t think it was a heart attack, but it was pretty scary. I have to call Carole on Monday.

Sunday, 10/08/2017

I was chain smoking yesterday, with long waits for buses and rides. This might explain the pain last night. I have a lot of reasons to quit, but haven’t felt the urgency yet, and just keep doing it. I don’t know what it’s going to take. There’s my health, money, and the elevator will be taken out of operation later this month, for a year. This would mean many hours wasted, stepping out for a cigarette 10 to 20 times a day. These are compelling reasons. I have to make some changes, but I don’t know what. Everything I do, everything I enjoy doing, I associate with smoking. Something’s gotta break.

Tuesday, 10/10/2017

I went back to the smoke shop yesterday, yet again. Two more packs. I don’t see myself quitting at this point. Alcohol was easy, it was imperative. So smoking is now. But there’s no reward like there was then, when Dad offered to pay for school. Something lit up and I was done with it. Never looked back, but for the occasional relapse dream.

I can’t sleep tonight. I forgot to take my olanzapine, and that’s usually a sedative. That and boredom. I normally take it between 8:30 and 10, and start to doze off by midnight. It’s 12:30 now, and I’m itching to go for the rest of the night. Don’t know what I’ll do, though. Coffee sounds really good.

It’s 7:00 PM. I’ve been wondering tonight where Dennis Adams is? Friendship is rare for me, but he was special, way back in the 80s while we went to school. I never got back in touch with him after that fateful Summer in Olympia. Google’s no help. It’s a very common name, and filtering the search gives nothing. “Dennis Adams Seattle.” “Dennis Adams electrical engineer.” He might have spelled it with one n, but it’s hard to remember. There’s a “Denis Adams” who died in Cle Elum in 2010. No photo, but the birthdate is about right, 1946. He was about 40 when we were at South Seattle College. Given the futility of finding him anywhere else, I wonder if this is him. It would be nice to talk to him, brush each other up on what happened in our lives.

That Summer sent me on a spiral. I went on a drinking spree, getting in fights, getting banned from bars or hanging on a thin thread in the others. I spent nights in jail. My checks bounced. I fell behind on the rent. I just had to get out of town. Dennis was in CA for the break, and I never went back to Olympia, except for a court date to explain the checks. I’d been accused of fraud. The judge was sympathetic when I mentioned that those were my college days.. “Oh, a college student,” or something like that. The charges were dropped.

I guess Dennis kept me in check. He’d confront me when I was drinking heavily; I resented it, but it made me sober up, at least for the night. He stepped in when things were escalating, keeping me out of real trouble. When he left town, I had no self control and was really an asshole, always pushing people’s buttons. He was the only thing standing between me and the disaster that came that Summer.

Friday, 10/13/2017

I’m getting very friendly gestures from women, maybe just polite gestures, but they seem to be on a different level. They seem to be inviting me to come forward and open up, make the first step that I’m always so reluctant to take. Courtney, a friend on Facebook and an aspiring blues singer whom I’ve supported on my blog, posted something on FB that was very different from what she usually posts, urging men to break the ice and ask women out, not worrying about rejection. I sensed that it was directed at me, but I often get that feeling, and shook it off. Then there was a young woman from UW psych at the bus stop. She almost looked like she was happy to see me. She stood next to me. I wanted to start a conversation. The bus was in the wrong lane, and the light seemed to take forever. I commented on this. She just said “yes,” and that was the end of it.

I had a dental appointment this morning. There was another young woman, again, almost seeming happy to see me. I rudely stepped on the elevator ahead of her, but she didn’t mind. “Have a nice day.”

When I left, there was another woman on the elevator. I asked how she was doing. She told me she was doing fine. We both got off in the lobby. About

halfway across the floor, I stopped and fumbled my phone, plugging in the ear buds. She was waiting for me at the door. I thanked her, and went on.

This is a rare opportunity for me. I can open up, I've done it before. But not with much success. It isn't just rejection, although Thanh still lingers in my mind. I've never developed the necessary social skills. I can do it on social media, from the comfort of my desk, and time to think through what I say. Personal contact is a different animal.

Saturday, 10/14/2017

Seems that when I go looking for it, things aren't anything the same. I smiled at a woman in the coffee shop this morning; she was just annoyed. I went looking around the grocery store. Nobody seemed to be in any mood to mingle. Couldn't even exchange eye contact. It's not a good place to pick up anymore; young people avoid personal contact there, doing their business and using the self checkout to get out quickly.

Wednesday, 10/18/2017

I wanted to talk to Melissa at the corner store the other day, but then realized I don't have anything to say. I don't know how to make small talk. I get annoyed by some people in the building, chatting about a bingo game or what they had for dinner, but I can't do much better. I'm not very interesting, unless we jump right into politics, and I've never been very good at making and engaging in conversation. Maybe I need to learn more about bingo.

Friday, 10/20/2017

I got a comply or vacate notice on my door yesterday. It said that I had twice failed to prepare my apartment for bug treatment. The last time, I had some clothes on a chair. I can't have everything bagged at all times. I can't find things if I do. I only have three pairs of underwear right now. The exterminator complained, and I said OK. That was the last treatment I knew of. Apparently, he returned yesterday. I never received a notice of this. Per the lease, I'm entitled to a 48 hour notice before they enter my unit. I was out when he came, and had no idea he'd been here. I talked to Lori today, who'd written the CoV, and found out from her. Now they won't return until I have my place prepped for it and inspected by staff. Irritating. I don't want to deal with James, but he'll be the one to inspect it. This is just getting worse as it goes on. I haven't seen any bugs in a while, but they insist I'm still infested. This has to be the last time.

Sunday, 10/22/2017

I don't think about sex very much these days. When I do, I don't feel as aroused as I usually do. I haven't had a rise in quite a while, and I'm wondering if I'll need medication for this. I guess I've had my mind on getting to first base; that's more important right now. Hopefully, it will come at the right time.

I’m giving up smoking at the end of the month. One more week to enjoy it. My health and money weren’t enough. Now, the elevator will be taken offline Monday, and that’s all that I can take.

I have to cut back on my americanos, too. I’m spending $10 a day at the coffee shop, about what I spend on cigarettes. I have an expensive espresso machine that will do the same thing, but I need to get out and see people through the day. Sometimes this is the only way I do it. If I quit smoking, I’ll be seeing people even less.

Tuesday, 10/24/2017

I have a lot of barriers keeping me from developing any semblance of a social life. There’s money, mental illness, alcoholism and lack of refined skills needed to interact with others. Wearing earbuds when I go out doesn’t help, either. It doesn’t invite people to chat. I need the music, though. It drowns out the chatter and the noise that can otherwise make me tense and nervous.

Even after 25 years, alcohol still has some control of me. I can go to a drinking establishment with a friend, and spend time drinking tea and enjoying their company. But I won’t think about walking in alone and hanging out. The temptation and the awkwardness are more than I can take.

My fixed income keeps me from doing a lot of things. This is changing with the trust fund; I’m going to shows now, and while I can’t take anyone with me, it’s a great place to meet people. I need to loosen up. I wish I knew how to dance. Other people learned to dance, as well as develop their social skills, in their high school years. I stayed away, hating others, wanting to be left alone. I missed a lot.

Thursday, 10/26/2017

I had some teeth extracted yesterday, and that wasn’t necessarily the low point of my day. I found a bed bug on my jacket. I hadn’t seen any in a month, haven’t had any bites, and it looked like they were about gone. Maybe one more treatment will do it. I’m not scheduled yet, I have to do that tomorrow.

There were a lot of small things. I can’t even remember what they were now. But I was pretty down through the day. Then the extraction was very painful. I was given an anesthesia, but it was very slow. Everybody wanted to get it over with. The dentist kept telling me to breathe through my nose; I couldn’t do this with my mouth wide open. He seemed irritated by this, and when it was over, he left the room immediately. He knocked the crown off another tooth. I’ll have to go back again to get this replaced.

I creeped a couple of women on the bus ride to the dentist. There was one seat when I got on. I took it. A pretty woman was sitting next to me, and I didn’t smile

or say hello. I kept thinking to myself, “say something,” but nothing came out. Then she seemed to become uncomfortable. I wondered if she was reading my mind. She got off at the first stop downtown, and I wondered if I’d scared her off the bus.

Then I exchanged glances with another woman. It wasn’t a glance, really, it seemed like a long time. I had no idea what she was thinking. Then she walked past. Now that I think about it, she might have been hinting for me to offer the seat. After the exchange, there was no way she would sit by me.

Kieras’s urging me to attend a therapy group next month. CBT+ or something. I’ve had CBT before, in individual sessions, and got little from it. She’s insisting this is different, CBT has really come along. It’s been around for many years, and has critics, and I can’t imagine that it’s really changed that much. She’s pressuring me by saying I’m being close-minded, which kind of hits a nerve. Maybe I am, but my experience tells me it isn’t worth the effort.

Friday, 10/27/2017

After nearly five years, I’ve lost my last connection with the college. Peter Anderson deleted his Facebook account, and that was how we stayed in touch. I have his phone number and email address, but haven’t used those in years. Our correspondence has been around news articles linked on FB. After being there so many years, putting in so much effort and forging so many relationships, there’s nothing left but the settlement and the trust fund, and that will be gone eventually, too.

Saturday, 10/28/2017

I was on my way home from the store, and four or five women were coming out of the hospital parking lot, all blondes. They saw me coming in their direction, and moved out into the street. I couldn’t hear what they were saying as they passed, but one did say “I’d hate to go out with him.” Damn, I took that personally. What’s going on now? I started wondering if it’s time to give up. But they aren’t from the neighborhood, or the hospital, they were just visiting. Having some “fun.” They probably don’t have any idea who I am. They got me, though. Very funny.

The blog’s in a rut. I’ve written very little lately, just forced what’s gone up. I have some good ideas, but I’m having trouble following through. I don’t know what’s holding me back. Maybe too much on my mind.

Sunday, 10/29/2017

I went to the drug store to get some cigarettes this morning. There was no line at the checkout, and two young women at the cash registers. One was a cute, perky, Asian woman, the other a homely white woman. The first one greeted me as if she knew me. I could have gone to either, but was drawn to her, thinking I might

even flirt with her. Didn't do that, but once I was checked, I walked by the second woman. She looked sad and lonely. I smiled and said hi. She responded, still looking dejected. Now I'm wondering if all the guys checking out were going to the perky one. I imagine that would make me feel a little lonely, too. I'm kinda sorry for being sucked in.

Monday, 10/30/2017

There's a $40 charge on my rent for not being ready for the treatment. I'm challenging this. They're obligated to give me a 48 hour notice before entering my apartment. James insists he left one on my door, but he's either lying or somebody else is trying to screw me. As it happened, I had no idea they were coming that day, couldn't be expected to be ready.

James got me to admit that I smoked a cigarette in my apartment this morning. Had one when I woke up, usually do. Do it before I get dressed and have my coffee. I have two more packs and I'm quitting after that, so it shouldn't matter. If he escalates it, though, I'll have my second lease compliance notice in a week, and I really don't need that hanging over me.

Thursday, 11/02/2017

Somebody is playing with my head. They're getting inside and trying to take control. I've had this feeling for a few days, but now I'm sure. This has happened before, way back in my last days in Capitol Hill. I'm a private person, and it's the ultimate invasion. I don't know who it is or why they're doing it, but it's got to stop.

I called Caroline for a nicotine patch prescription the other day, then bought two more packs of cigarettes this morning. This has to be the last. The coughing is terrible, and I just want to be done with it. It's causing too many problems now.

I've slept nearly this entire day, or for half of it, anyway. I've been tired, and I don't have a better coping mechanism for things like these than to lay down, go on a train of thought, and eventually get up relaxed or go into dreamland. That or smoking. I did talk to Kaitlyn at the Coffee Tree today, and damn if I don't have a crush on her. I was going to get her phone number, but held off. Why's that so hard for me?

I'm going to a concert this weekend. Tedeschi Trucks Band, a great rock-blues combo. Maybe this will lift me up.

Friday, 11/03/2017

I was getting tired of seeing people today. The elevator ride was long and crowded, with no relief. Usually there are breaks, but people were coming in and out all day, leading to some long waits. It snowed today, and others felt obligated to tell me so, even when I was standing in the stuff. The service at the grocery

store is going downhill, and there have been some long waits in line lately. I went out there and back riding the bus of a driver I can't stand. He's always late, and he can't drive the short distance between First Hill and Broadway Market without blowing his damn horn at least once, sometimes several times. Every trip.

It's been annoyances like these. It doesn't help that I haven't quit smoking yet, so it's been like this all day, with few breaks. It doesn't help that I didn't sleep last night and was tired throughout. A little cranky, too.

Sunday, 11/05/2017

I went to the concert tonight, and the show was great. I wasn't in any mood to talk to people, though. I felt isolated throughout the evening, sitting alone and getting the feeling my BO was driving people away. It occurred to me I haven't showered in several days, and after the intermission, the seats around me were empty. I have to do something about my hygiene, especially being a smoker.

The woman in front of me was very enthusiastic, and I could appreciate that, but the seats were back-to-back instead of V-spaced, putting me directly behind her. As she waved her hands and shook her head, I couldn't see the stage. I debated how best to confront her about it, and it really was an uncomfortable situation to be in, but after the first two or three songs, she calmed down. Problem solved.

I left early. The concert started at 7:30, but there was a long intermission, and at about 10:15, it looked like it was going to continue for a while. I don't like to leave with the crowd anyway, and quietly left early.

Tuesday, 11/07/2017

I'm finally cleared for the bed bugs. I haven't slept in a bed in months. I've been waiting until they're gone before getting out the new one. It's a twin size, much smaller than I'm used to, but it will feel nice tonight. I can finally get rid of these bags around the floor and put my clothes where they belong. I can even have company now. Not that I do very often, but it's nice to know I can.

I seem to be hitting it off nicely with Kaitlyn, and I have a feeling she'd be happy to go out with me, but I haven't been able to bring myself to ask her. I'll have to do it soon. She only works there part-time, and might not stay long.

Thursday, 11/09/2017

There was a bug on my jacket today. I threw everything back in the dryer, and hopefully, that will be the end of it. I'm not going to report this unless I see more. I haven't gotten everything out of the bags, but I don't want to go through this again. If there are more, and they're in my clothes, I'll have to take care of it ASAP, or I'll be spreading them all over.

Still haven't asked Kaitlyn out. She almost seemed to be waiting for me to say something today. We chatted as usual, but she gave me a look, like she knows how I feel and wants the same thing I do. She seems patient.

Saturday, 11/11/2017

With all the attention on men in power and their sexual exploitations, I've been thinking about some of the things I did thirty years ago, when I was still drinking and hadn't yet been diagnosed. Even back then, I didn't feel right about it, but alcohol and mental illness were pretty intoxicating.

Then there's Thanh. She thought I had some kind of power or authority over her. I didn't, beyond making the schedule for the help desk, but now I realize why she wasn't more assertive in responding to my propositions. I wasn't drunk, I wasn't having delusions, at least at first. I just held out hope. In the process, I was sexually harassing her, at least from her perspective.

I'm waiting on Caroline to prescribe nicotine patches for me. We haven't made contact, just voice messages. She has questions, such as how much I smoke. I've answered this, and don't know what else she needs. She's only at the clinic three days a week, so this might take a while. I might have to wait until I see her in December.

I've already spent $5,000 from the trust fund, and that doesn't include the charges, which aren't cheap. Most of this has been for the dental work, so it should slow down before long. Still, I hate to see it dwindling down this fast. I've made two other big-ticket purchases, the air conditioner and the espresso machine. I'll be buying a new bed soon. I can't continue to sleep in this tiny twin-size piece. After that, I don't see any large expenses coming soon.

Saturday, 11/18/2017

I saw Taj Mahal last night. It was a good concert, but the high point of the night came on the way home. There was a pretty young lady smiling at me, must have barely been 18. I don't know if she knew who I was, but she looked pretty happy. She was looking me right in the eye. I wanted to join her, but I wasn't sure she was of age, and I didn't want to get into it with a kid. Still, I was flattered that she would be fond of an older guy like myself. Maybe she likes father figures, but I'd be a terrible father.

I have to find something to occupy my time at night. News and social media slow down, and I get bored. With nothing to do, I go to bed with a crossword puzzle and listen to the news, trying to go to sleep early. I'd stay up til 2 or 3 if I wasn't bored. I only sleep a few hours, and get up at early times. I'm tired all day, and make up for it by napping. This wastes a good part of the day.

There’s the blog, but I can only spend so much time on that. I want to do more than I am now, but I’m short on ideas. More videos, maybe. That’s not very creative, but it’s a start.

Reading is something else to try. I haven’t read a book in years. Just technical stuff. I don’t read very much of that now, either. And the news, but again, that’s pretty slow late at night.

Monday, 11/20/2017

The elevator is affecting my mood. After a few trips, I get pretty irritable. It only takes one time, really. Knowing that it will be like this for a year, and being helpless to change it, are really grinding on me. It’s a good reason to quit smoking.

Tuesday, 11/21/2017

Now I’m having dreams about the elevator. It doesn’t seem to be a big deal to most people. They’re able to laugh it off. Not me. I’ve read it’s easier to adapt to major catastrophes than to smaller annoyances or aggravations. The human brain is just better developed for the former. I didn’t cry when Dad died, but I was screaming in the dream.

Wednesday, 11/22/2017

When you pay the store with food stamps, people notice what you’re spending it on. Or, sometimes there’s a tinge of guilt, using what’s meant to help people survive, and buying a steak or a bottle of syrup, as I did today. My account was .30¢ short, and my ears starting burning as I waved my EBT card a second time, people behind me watching and wondering what was holding things up. Was just trying to balance my funds. I bought some cigarettes with my bank money. People would say I shouldn’t smoke if I can’t afford it. That’s the idea with the regressive taxes on tobacco. It doesn’t work. It’s mainly poor people who smoke, and we’ll find a way if we need to. I got a check in the mail later, and will borrow some money tomorrow.

I had a run-in with a guy downstairs. He’s had it in for me for a while, after I refused to wait around and hold the elevator for him. I’ve brushed him off, but today he was he was brushing against me on the elevator, maybe not deliberately, but I was against the wall and couldn’t move away. I said “excuse me,” and we had a verbal exchange. He gave me some space after that, but I have a feeling the management is going to step in, and I really don’t want to have them involved.

Friday, 11/24/2017

I’m thinking about skipping out on these family gatherings in the future. Gary and I have never gotten along. He won’t even shake my hand when I reach out to

him. His solution to everything is to work harder for it, like he does, and any other path is alien to him. He doesn't understand what it means to be disabled, or even care a rat's ass; he resents seeing his taxes go to assist people who don't have jobs and thinks they're all milking the system.

Lori and I have drifted apart since Dad's death. She doesn't return my calls or messages anymore, and yesterday, didn't want to talk to me at all. She was feeling down, I found out later; Nicole had taken over the Thanksgiving event, and didn't include Lori in any of the preparations. But we don't communicate, and I get the feeling our relationship is being estranged again.

Jeff and I never had much in common, and now that neither of us follow sports closely, we have little to talk about. I don't know what his interests are. He reads a lot; what he reads, I can only guess. I try to keep up on his health issues and be supportive, but our conversations don't develop into anything meaningful.

That leaves Mom and Joe, and Lori's kids. The first two, I speak to frequently, and can visit almost anytime. Jen seems to have a similar view of me as her father does. Nicole and I have a good relationship, or seem to these days. It hasn't always been that way. Colin's polite, but we have no running relationship.

It's more stress than enjoyment. I'm getting tired of it. It's a hassle to get there, a long bus trip plus the drive from Mom's. I want to find another way to spend my holidays. Maybe spend time with Theresa or neighbors.

On the way home last night, I was standing on the corner by the bus station, smoking a cigarette. A woman came by, looking at me but mumbling. I assumed she wanted a smoke, but I asked her to confirm it. I asked her a second time. She walked past, still indecipherable. Then she returned a minute later, with a clear voice, boldly asking if I could spare a couple of dollars for food. I couldn't, and usually wouldn't, anyway, but this woman needed help. I began to walk away, and it occurred to me I had leftovers from the Thanksgiving dinner. I handed that to her, then went to my stop. When I looked back, she was pouring food from the container to her mouth. She was hungry. When the bus left a few minutes later, the container was empty. She really needed that.

Tuesday, 11/28/2017

Kaitlyn now mentions her boyfriend every time we speak. As if she's telling me "whoa, I'm not available." Not the kind of sign I'm really hoping for. I can't stop now. Stop what? We have good conversations, but it hasn't led to much at this point.

Wednesday, 11/29/2017

There's been a pattern in my dreams I'm trying to sort out. Rooms are large, wide open spaces. When I'm outdoors, there are always walls or barriers, sometimes making me feel confined. I live in the center of the city, and rarely

visit the countryside, so the barriers are something I see every day, without much variation. I don't know about the rooms; I live in an apartment, a studio. It's a good sized studio, but with furniture and office equipment, it's pretty cramped. The only large, open spaced interiors I see are at the concerts, although those are crowded with people. Still the closest I can think of. But it's probably a symbol of something else. I don't know what that would be.

Monday, 12/04/2017

I'm not sure what's changing in my life, but nights of peace and solitude are turning into boredom and isolation. I've lived alone my entire adult life, and recently have been getting tired of this. Maybe it's that I have so much time on my hands, without enough to fill the void. But I've been feeling lonely, too. I haven't felt a need like this before.

It's been six years this week since I left the college. I've never even gone back to say hello, even when I was working nearby. I wonder who's still there and what they remember about me, if they remember me at all. I have no ties there, except Peter. I always cut people off when I leave. I only remember the bad things, and want to put it behind me. I usually have regrets about this. When I want to reach somebody from those years, I can't find them. Or they're dead.

Wednesday, 12/06/2017

I'm getting comments about the dark bags under my eyes. It's been developing over the last few years: Lack of sleep, aging, and many hours gazing at the computer screen are the main causes, I think. It seems like it started when I was working grave shift at T-Mobile. I wasn't there for very long, but I haven't returned to a normal sleep pattern since then. I'm not tired at night, and try to force sleep. That doesn't work. I'm back up within a few hours, and try to catch up later in the day. I need to wait until I'm tired. And stop drinking coffee after dinner.

Now I'm wondering what other people are thinking about my eyes. Two have mentioned it in a couple of weeks, but no one had ever brought it up before. I'm not very self-conscious, at least as far as appearance, but this is bugging me right now. Looking at the mirror right now, it's the first thing to stand out. I don't know if that's what others see, but it could well be. Not a good first impression.

I'm pretty sure people are reading my mind. Last week, on a crowded elevator, a woman kept pushing the buttons, and I was getting annoyed by this. I started silently swearing. Not moving my lips, it was just to myself. She suddenly turned and gazed at me. She didn't look at anybody else, she turned directly to me. We looked at each other for what seemed like a long time, her smiling. It was strange.

This morning, Two of us were waiting for our drinks at the coffee shop, her standing a few feet away from me. Watching the barista, a brief thought went

through my head. I don't even remember what it was, other than sexual and I got a little tingle. That was all. The woman waiting with me immediately moved away. She sensed something. I don't know if she knew exactly what I was thinking, but it was like she felt creeped. What did she know?

Monday, 12/11/2017

This is crazy. There were five or six of us waiting for the elevator on the first floor. Another had a walker, and was politely letting everybody else enter first. I started to go in, but this Muslim guy, with an attitude and a strong dislike for me, stepped in front of me to get on first. An old man, also with a walker, stepped in at four, upset with the first walker, who couldn't step away from the door. He chided him for the entire trip. He was so upset, he forgot to push the button for the sixth floor lobby. The Muslim also failed to push his button. Everybody was angry for the entire trip. The poor guy on the first walker is very sensitive, and I felt a little bad for him, but I was laughing after getting off. This place is insane.

I doubled my medication again. I was unsure, and after having a seizure, I decided I needed it. I've been having a lot of seizures recently. I laid down for an hour, and got up a little dazed. It would actually be a good feeling if it were in my control. I might usually have gotten angry and stressed on the elevator; this time, I enjoyed the ride.

When I went out earlier, I saw Rosa, the onsite nurse, dressed very strikingly. She was probably going to a meeting or something, but she could have been headed someplace special. I only learned her name last week, and didn't even know we had a nurse before. Now she's been on my mind all morning. I'm trying to think of a reason to visit her office. Maybe to talk about quitting smoking.

I'll finally be getting a prescription for nicotine patches this week. I could have paid out-of-pocket, but it was an excuse. I can't do this anymore. This is the time for it. I coughed for five minutes earlier, and my chest was rumbling. This is the scare I need. A guy down the hall was on an oxygen tank for several years. He's clinically obese. Recently, he began going to the gym, and he's off the tank now. Gives me a little hope. I haven't checked their prices, but I'm sure I can do it financially once I stop smoking. If nothing else, I could pay for the year out of the trust fund if I'm sure I'll use it.

Thursday, 12/14/2017

It's occurred to me if I'm not smoking, there won't be as much motivation to get out of my chair often. I step out often for a cigarette now; other than that I spend long hours glued to the desk. That isn't healthy. I have to think of another way to motivate myself to get up and move around. Not necessarily exercise, just a few minutes every hour walking around the room, if nothing else.

The seizures are coming almost daily, and I need to see my neurologist soon. The meds had done very well for so long, but now something's changing and I need

to find out what that is. I don't look forward to the tests, but maybe he'll have a different suggestion.

There's a new rule at the clinic: People like myself are to spend at least 2 ½ hours there each month to satisfy specifications. I spend about half an hour there now, and don't want to think about three or four visits. I can't think of anything else I would do there. I don't have any desire to attend group therapy meetings. I did that for years, and it was nothing but a time filler. I didn't feel any better when I left, and never bonded with others there. I feel closer to the baristas than I ever did with those in group therapy. You'd think schizophrenia would be a powerful common bond; it didn't seem like we had anything else in common, and this was too hard to overcome.

Saturday, 12/16/2017

Caroline neglected to prescribe the patches. I went to the pharmacy today, and they only had information on the gum, which isn't covered by insurance, and is costly to get OTC. I'm not clear on the coverage of the patches; they only had info on the gum. I'll have to head to the drug store tomorrow and pay out-of-pocket. From the Medicare website, only counseling appears to be covered, and I want to have it before Monday.

Tuesday, 12/19/2017

I bought nicotine patches for $39 yesterday, and I just spent my last $19 on two packs of Kools this morning. At this point, it's will power. I don't have the strength to take the first step. I'm getting disappointed with myself.

I have $30 in rolled coins, but the nearest teller services for the credit union are out in Tukwilla, nearly a mile off the bus route. It's not a pleasant walk on any day, but it's pouring rain this morning, and I'll exchange these at a different time. I'm thinking of switching banks because of this; after the bus trip, I pass the freeway into a mixed office/industrial zone, with concrete boxes lined up the whole way, and an occasional planter, as if to relieve the misery. The bank building is far back from the main street. I cross parking lots, detouring around cars and trucks, eventually making it to the door. Inside, it's a sterile look. I once interviewed for a job there, and liked the prospect of working for a non-profit credit union. But going through this every day would have been demoralizing.

Friday, 12/22/2017

I got an early Christmas gift from Mom this week. It should carry me through to the end of the month. I don't know what I'd do without her. Even if I quit smoking this coming year, I still come up short on my budget. It's pretty close, though, and I might be able to squeeze by. There will be a raise on Social Security, the first in many years. This might balance things out.

I'll be spending Christmas Eve at a gathering at Mom's, and I need to get away from here, even if it's only for a day. People's attitudes are rubbing me right now. I don't know if it's seasonal stress, or if they're directing their anger at me, but it's not just the usual three or four people. It almost seems concerted. I've been through it before, and again, it will pass. Maybe with the new year.

Monday, 12/25/2017

Things didn't go off very well last night. I was an hour early, and offered to help Mom, but just got in the way. I joined Jeff in the living room, watching a football game. After an initial greeting, I asked him about his rehab training. He became annoyed, and didn't want to talk about anything but the game. We sat silently.

The others came late. Gary surprised me, offering to shake my hand and chat for a minute. I guess Lori and Mom have talked to him. There were a couple of single women there, both with dogs, Gary's sister Lisa and a friend of Joe's named Carol. There was a spot next to Lisa at the dinner table. I asked if anyone was sitting there, and my niece Nicole quickly blurted out, "Dylan's sitting there." I left with a whimper. Mom suggested I grab a chair from the kitchen counter, but I said "no, this is easier." I sat in the living room, not talking to Lisa for the rest of the night.

Joe and Carol came after everybody had eaten. After an introduction, I asked her where she was from. Pretty benign question. I ask that of most people to break the ice. She acted surprised and annoyed. Maybe she found it sexist that I didn't first ask her about her occupation. She said she was from southern Cal, but it was awkward for me after that.

It got really bad when it came time to leave. At night, the Auburn-Kent-Downtown trip can be a pain. The first two buses run 30 minutes intervals at night, and there's no guarantee they'll make connections. Somebody usually drives me into Kent. Last night, nobody but would give me a ride. I got a little pissed. It wasn't really that far out of their way. Lori then called Uber, and would pay the fare. Now I felt like a heel, and a burden on the rest of them. I first said I would catch the Auburn bus, but she insisted. I wasn't as grateful as I should have been. I just felt like an ass.

In Downtown Seattle, the #s 3 and 4 buses weren't on the GPS, but were scheduled to arrive soon. These are the last leg of the trip, taking me up the hill. After 20 minutes or so, neither had arrived, and a woman, clearly upset, told me she had been waiting longer than an hour. I knew they were on the snow route, but 3rd Ave. is on that path. I was first going to call a cab, but while waiting for an operator, decided I couldn't afford the fare. I walked the rest of the way, in the snow, with a paper bag weighing what must have been 20 to 30 pounds. At least I made it home. I feel a little bad that I couldn't be any help to the woman.

The day's been quiet and peaceful, if boring. After last night, that's just fine. I visited Teresa for a little bit, and she made me feel grateful that I have family to

go to. She had a terrible experience growing up, and cut off all connections long ago. Now she spends holidays with her dog, Precious. She got a Christmas gift for herself, and something for Precious. And the two of them spend the day together. It would seem to be a very lonely way to spend the holiday.

Monday, 12/25/2017

Dad never taught me how to fight growing up. There were a lot of things I didn't learn, but this got me hurt and humiliated many times. I had a recurring dream: I faced a bigger guy than myself, who'd been harassing and intimidating me. I brought my elbow back, and clenched my fist. As I began to swing, my arm turned limp like a noodle. He laughed out loud. He then cocked his elbow, and as he began to swing, I woke up. In real life, my confidence was so low, if I couldn't immediately grab a weapon, I just got pounded, not even fighting back. I had this dream up until I stopped drinking and started getting therapy. I didn't get in fights after that, either.

This Christmas was my first without Dad. I missed him, but not the tense gathering with Barb's kids. I always hated spending the day at that their place. This was after spending the evening at Mom's. Much more pleasant there, but it made for some long and stressful holidays.

There's some mischief in the estate, as I was sure there would be. In something as complex as an estate, there are bound to be disputes, but I don't trust Don, and get the feeling he's taking advantage of his power. There is a jeweled watch, made by Dad's father and handed down to him, and that I was to inherit. Now Don and Jeff Bell have consolidated Dad and Barb's art and jewelry, and have put it up for sale. The watch is priced at $900. I'm debating whether to buy it. I'm not up to challenging this. The inheritance wasn't included in the final will. I don't have any legal base, and hiring a lawyer would be too much of a drain on the trust. I suppose it's important enough to keep it in the family.

Wednesday, 1/03/2018

I posted a comment on Facebook the other night, and my brother Joe was the only one who seemed to appreciate the humor. I suspect everybody else read it literally. I said that my resolution was to get laid this year; could come across as being a little desperate. Maybe I am.

I kept meeting Rosa on the elevator. today This would usually be a perfect opportunity to chat and get to know somebody. It was crowded and noisy, though, with one person even coughing in my face. But even when we got off on the same floor, we didn't say much. I have a feeling we could talk on end, but I don't know where to start.

Kaytlin won't talk to me without mentioning her boyfriend. It's like a sign she wears around her neck. I'm sure she loves him, and is very happy, but does she have to wave it at me every time?

Saturday, 1/13/2018

I'm having trouble writing. I haven't even updated this in ten days. I'm having a hard time keeping the blog fresh as well. Maybe writing my thoughts here will get me in the groove.

Another missing item, this time fingernail clippers. These things don't turn up later. Once they're missing they're gone. If somebody is coming in and taking them, why would they limit it to such small items? A few lighters, a plastic container, things of that nature. It's like they want to leave me uncertain enough to drive me crazy. I was going to change the lock on the door at one point; the setup I have uses one key to open both the knob and the bolt. If somebody has one, they have both. I've put this off, but now I'm going to have to follow through on it.

Sunday, 1/14/2018

I skipped a concert the other night. It would have been good for me to get out, but I was tired, dirty and had unfinished work to do. The management sent me a notice that they would be by to inspect my housekeeping on Friday. They never came. I wonder if this is even legal. It's intrusive, and it isn't any of their business. They want to manage your lifestyle, make you a 'good tenant' who keeps his place tidy and doesn't smoke. Or do anything "illegal." There's a sign outside that says "trespassing and illegal activity are strictly forbidden here." I guess a drug dealer better take his goods next door. It's just the kind of bureaucratic thinking that drives this place. Most landlords are happy if you pay the rent on time. This place has a plethora of rules to follow.

Monday, 1/15/2018

There was a large crowd, about ten or eleven people, waiting by the elevator downstairs, and I began to panic. I get uncomfortable when there are more than four or five on the car. It didn't develop into an attack, but my stomach was knotted and a feeling of fear of what was going to happen went through my head. It was a long wait, and once we were on, people were shoving to get in place. A guy moved in front of me on the way up, in my face. He had room, I'm sure it was deliberate. I'm claustrophobic, as well as having social anxiety disorder. These rides can be long and stressful. Then others won't comply with simple rules of elevator etiquette, making it that much harder. Six to twelve months of this is going to make me a basket case.

Thursday, 1/18/2018

There was blood in my bowel, and I'll be getting a colonoscopy in a couple of weeks to see if it's something serious. I'm not worried at this point, but I'm not looking forward to the procedure. I guess they'll sedate me for it, but it's still not

very comfortable to think about. I'll only be drinking liquids the day before, and I'm sure coffee is frowned upon. I hate to think about a day without that.

My income tax return will be very complicated this year, or so it appears. I have to account for the settlement and the trust, and I'm sure I'll be paying a lot this year, perhaps thousands. I don't know. There's a charity service at the college. The people there are professional volunteers. I have a lot of questions for them.

I have to find something to do at night. News and social media slow down, I don't have TV, and I get very bored. I'm not very tired, but I go to bed early, like 10 or 11, and I'm awake again in a few hours, with lots of energy. I don't sleep well. I need something to keep me up much later. I don't want a television; I got tired of the garbage and reruns I was watching when I got rid of it. I need to keep myself busy for a few hours. Writing more, maybe. I remember staying out at the bars, drinking and socializing late at night. I don't know an alternative for this.

Saturday, 1/20/2018

I've been dreaming a lot the last few days. Thing is, it's been quantity, not quality. Just dreams about my daily routine, involving myself, neighbors and family. I don't usually dream this frequently, but it's usually much more interesting when I do. I can't think of a reason for the change.

I'm going through another unit inspection. This time, the manager, Laura, is handling me. She gave me a long list, some things I'd already done, but apparently weren't up to her standards. She wants me to "sanitize" the place; what the hell is she talking about? She spotted things that nobody else has noticed before in over 20 years. The list is long, and she is very hard to please. This is going to be aggravating.

Wednesday, 1/24/2018

I'm buying ground beef. I haven't had it in years, but with the balance on my food stamps, I couldn't afford chicken or steak for chili. I make it with rice and beans, so a half a pound of it should should be ample, but it isn't the same. I've always been poor, and had sacrifices to make, but sometimes little things like this are hard to take.

I've calmed down about the inspection. I couldn't sleep the other night. Laura kept coming to my mind, making me more angry. Her list still blows me away. She picked out things that would have passed before. Usually, there would be one or two items. There's close to a dozen on her list. She doesn't seem to like the way I organize. She mentioned dishes on the counter and trash needing to be taken out. I'm sure she's referring to my coffee and recycling areas. I'll stop here. My blood's beginning to boil again.

Friday, 1/26/2018

I’m taking my time on the apartment. Lori (that’s her name, not Laura) won’t be back until next month, so I have plenty of it. I should get a weeks notice, so there isn’t a rush, although I’m still taken by the list. The kitchen was the first thing she mentioned when I talked to her, and she couldn’t possibly pick at that now. I’m relaxed tonight. It’s Friday, I won’t see the management until Monday, and I can just lay back and enjoy the music. There’s some great blues radio on weekends, hours of it, and I can really groove with it, late into the night.

There’s a nice young woman downstairs, beautiful lady, and we’ve been talking more and more. Not long conversations, but she gives me a friendly smile, and I feel more comfortable than usual. She’s very young, like 20 or 21 I’d guess. I know that being polite and friendly is a long stretch from any kind of affection, but I have hope. She lives with her mother, works at the corner store, and studies biology at the college. She’s interesting, smart, and I need to step up. Find out her name, for Christ's sake.

Wednesday, 1/31/2018

I’m starting to get uncomfortable having the elevator crew around. They’re nice folks up front, but they watch me coming in and out of my apartment all day, making me feel like I’m in a glass bowl. Again, they’re very friendly when I talk to them, but I have to wonder what they say when I’m not around.

The bed bugs are back. I’m reluctant to report it, and go through the hell of the treatment process again. It would also give Lori reason to give the unit even more scrutiny. I still don’t know what she means by sanitize, but it can’t be a pleasant task. I’ll have to talk to the social worker about getting help on this.

Friday, 2/02/2018

The bag under my left eye is getting dark and puffy. I need to get this examined. It might be a good reason to talk to Rosa and see what she can recommend. I’m not sure when this started to develop. Looking at old photos, I started getting wrinkles when I was at the college, but these bags are fairly recent, like five or six years.

I haven’t reported the bugs yet. A guy on the maintenance crew seemed to be prodding me to bring it up today, asking me repeatedly if there were any problems in my apartment. I turned the conversation to the inspection, but I’m pretty sure they know about it. I don’t want to go through it again, but there isn’t a choice.

The blog is dead. I’m not sure what’s going on, but nobody’s coming. At least, that’s what the analytics tools are reporting. AWStats was offline for a week, and now indicates zero visits for three or four straight days. That’s down from hundreds a day. The support team said I would be better off using Google Analytics. It’s a pain, and I’m not sure it’s configured correctly, but the numbers are similar.I don’t do much to promote it, but people know about it. They just aren’t coming. I might be wasting my time.

Sunday, 2/04/2018

I woke at 4:00AM today, and didn't go back to sleep until 8. I ended up sleeping the rest of the morning. I'm still a little drowsy, but should be able to go pretty late. This insomnia is getting pretty bad. I'm not ready to try medication, but it might come to that. I'm not sure what prompts me to get up so early. I know what time it is, and that I need more sleep, but at the same time, I feel a surge of energy and jump right out of bed. Sometimes I'm not up for long, but days like this one throw me out of whack.

I can't figure out what these large rooms are about in my dreams. Lots of floor space, high ceilings; something like a warehouse. It's this way over and over. I haven't found anything quite like this on the internet, and I don't have a guess what it might mean. The only thing in my past that I can associate it with is time spent working in warehouses or production lines many years ago. Then the computer lab at the college. There must be some connection to the lab, but I don't know what that would be.

Monday, 2/05/2018

Lori's mad at me. She gave me a bitchy look when I said hi to her this morning. The crew guy must have told her what I said last week. He seems like a nice guy, but he set me up for it. He called her a bitch himself. I have to play along with it. She has power over me; she wouldn't hesitate to give me an eviction notice. It seems like she must be getting near the end of her tenor as the manager here. They don't stay more than a few years.

Wednesday, 2/07/2018

The manager is returning Friday, and I've barely made a dent. The list is overwhelming. Lori is a nit-picker and a control freak. It's hard to motivate myself knowing anything I do will fail in her eyes. She has a big peeve about cigarettes: One of the first things she did when she came here was put everybody on notice that she would have zero tolerance for smoking in the apartments. She recently painted arrows on the sidewalk, directing people to the approved smoking areas. And she can't stand the cumulative nicotine stains and some long-time residents walls. Wiping down the walls is one item on my list. I'm to clean the bathroom and floors again, the first time wasn't good enough. And dust was unacceptable. Those are just a few of the items. I have an appointment tomorrow afternoon, so I have less than a day to do it all. Right now I just feel like trashing it and telling her to fuck off.

Friday, 2/09/2018

I've waited all day for the manager to drop by. I need to get out of here, but have to be around this time, to talk to her as she finds things she doesn't like. I spent last night working on her list, but she isn't going to be satisfied. Just a feeling.

She’s writing me up because of dust! What a bitch. She could smell cigarette smoke, too, and that doesn’t help. I’ve had difficulty with past managers, but this one is a control freak who wants everybody to conform to her vision of a model tenant. I’m no model, and don’t want to be. But she’s got me under her thumb, and I can’t see an end to this soon.

Saturday, 2/10/2018

I’m calm and relaxed tonight. I’ll accept anything Lori gives me. I have no choice. I’ve been here over 20 years, and sure don’t have any place else to go. I sure couldn’t live in Seattle if I left here. This is the worst it’s been for me in all of this time, but I’ll get through it. I have a feeling she wants to see me go, but I won’t let that happen. She can’t evict me without just cause.

I’m listening to my favorite radio program, All Blues on KNKX. Sometimes it’s repetitious, but the DJ plays some good music late into the night. It’s helping me relax. I have one last pack of cigarettes. I’m reluctant, but if I can’t smoke inside at night, or even when I wake at 4:00 AM, it isn’t worth it.

I haven’t been very worried about the exam coming up. There’s a possibility of cancer, but it hasn’t sunk into me what that means. My doctor didn’t seem concerned, just mentioned it and said we need to be sure that’s not what it is. There doesn’t seem to be any cause for alarm at this point. It won’t be a very pleasant experience, though, with the preparation and fasting, and the anesthesia throughout.

Sunday, 2/11/2018

I’m losing my mind. With everything going on right now, I’m forgetting important things. I failed to publish a post on the blog last week, and it’s to late to put it up now. I made a lunch date with Mom, but I forgot that, too. The exam will be over this week, but I don’t know how soon I’ll know the results. And, Lori will be back for another inspection in the next couple of weeks. These are causing me a lot of anxiety, and the usual things (money) are lingering. I’ve waited over a week for a statement from LA+ on my trust account, and the delay isn’t helping me. I’m really anxious to find out what it’s costing me in charges and fees.

I’m wondering how serious I am about giving up smoking. I’m already having thoughts of going to the gas station in a few hours to buy another pack.

A couple hours ago, I was talking to the security guard about how quiet it’s been today. It’s been a little strange, a very nice day, but nobody was around. Either they went out early and stayed out all day, or just withdrew, missing the good weather. Now, it’s about 7:00, and there are eight police cars outside. There was a stabbing here, and they’re searching all over the building. I commented a couple of times, but people ignored me.

I'm weakening. As I run out, I'm giving more thought to getting another pack of cigarettes. The gas station closes its doors in four hours. I'm really, really having trouble thing about going through the night without a smoke. After 40 years, it's hard to picture myself without a cigarette in my hand. I have to do this.

I have no appetite tonight. All I need to do is zap some leftovers, but I have no desire to eat right now. I'm hungry, but that isn't enough.

The cars are gone, but the police are still here. I got off the elevator in the lobby and guns were drawn. When I came back upstairs, there were four of them in my hallway. I can't go back out there again tonight.

Monday, 2/12/2018

I made it for 12 hours, not really bad. I was asleep most of that time, but there were a couple of hours on each end, and woke up for about an hour in between. Skipped lighting up before and after my first coffee. Not bad.

Friday, 2/16/2018

I'm getting the feeling people are angry at me today. It started last night. Somebody drove past as I was having a smoke, and I swear he flipped me off. It happened quickly, and I just caught it out of the corner of my eye, but he made some gesture with his hand, and I swear it was the birdie. I don't know who he could have been that time of night. He wasn't a JT resident; the parking lot is on the other side of the building. A stranger, who must somehow know me, leaving the hospital at 10PM.

Also last night, my neighbor seemed to avoid me. We were both going downstairs from the 17th floor. She struggle on her feet, and usually carried a walking stick. But this time, she saw me waiting for the elevator, and took the stairway. She was only going to 16, but I noticed several minutes later she rode the elevator back upstairs. She's a nice woman, and we get along very well, but I wondered if she was staying away from me.

I started to chat with the food delivery woman this morning, but she gave me a cold treatment. She wasn't rude, but didn't want to talk to me. She's new, if that matters. It wouldn't bug if there didn't seem to be a pattern, Is it something I've done? I'm getting unhappy looks and rude gestures today as well.

The colonoscopy didn't go through. My system wasn't clean enough, and I'll have to arrange for another appointment and go through the procedure yet again. I'm not in a hurry.

There's a new guy on the maintenance staff here whom I've been getting along with, and built some trust with. That doesn't happen often for me. But I'm beginning to wonder if I should watch what I say about Lori and other staff. I'm

getting the feeling he's passing it along. Lori made a strange gesture as we were waiting for the elevator, and it struck me just then.

Saturday, 2/17/2018

It was a crazy morning. I'd seemed to have lost control of the volume on my computer. Sliding it left, it was increasing, or would suddenly mute as I was trying to adjust. I thought somebody was hijacking the computer. I disconnected, and the behavior continued. I tried logging off and going into a different desktop environment, but it was the same. Same with the system tools. I rebooted. Still the same. I started to panic. I wondered if I was going to be without the music all day. I hate to think about it. But worse, somebody else might be taking control. It happened when I was disconnected, so that should have been eliminated.

I went to my email and sent a message to the support mailing list for my Linux system. It was bounced, with an error message I haven't seen before. I tried to decode this, but I was afraid I'd been booted from the list for some reason. I couldn't think clearly. The explanations made no sense.

I went to the forums. I haven't been there in a couple of years, so I didn't have any idea what my password was. I tried changing it, but it wasn't working in Firefox. I was really worried now. It then worked in the Chromium browser, but it's ridiculous that I couldn't do it in FF. Maybe it was the script blocker.

I posted in the forum, expecting the usual people to come up with ideas using the CLI. But they seemed to ignore it. I didn't leave there on good terms, so maybe they still have a grudge. But somebody suggested an application that might work. It wouldn't fix the problem, but it did give me control within that program.

Then I realized the problem was a long delay, about 20 seconds. I posted this on the board, but haven't heard from anybody. But it isn't quite as serious as it seemed to be. I also looked closely at the bounced email. I'd mistyped the address. I'll send another message if I don't hear back from the forums soon.

A middle aged Asian woman seemed to be getting very friendly today. I was back in the corner, her in front. Somebody else came on, and she suddenly moved to the back with me, with her back pack pushing against me. We went a couple floors like this, and I started to get turned on by it. I stepped away, without saying anything. We exchanged glances, and rode the rest of the way. It's hard to say what was happening, but I'd like to meet her again sometime.

Sunday, 2/18/2018

I'm putting off prepping my place for the bug treatment. It's really a pain to do, and I'm finding excuses for the delay. And once I've done it, my clothes are bagged for weeks. That's harder than it sounds. It's very hard to find things. I might dig through three or four bags before I find what I need. I lost some things

last time, underwear in particular. I still have a couple bags in the closet; I might find it there.

There's a crazy woman down the hall who's upset with me right now. She's been here two or three months When she first moved in, she was very friendly to me, too friendly, grabbing my arm and talking into my face, like inches away, very loud. But she seemed to take a liking to me, and I tolerated it. She isn't bad looking, but her behavior turns most men off. She brings some vagrant-looking men home with her, and had a black eye not long after moving in.

Tonight, I was entering the building, and she had been waiting for me outside. As I opened the door, she shoved me aside and entered in front of me. I don't remember what she said, but she was ranting and rambling, talking to me or anyone who would listen. The security guard wasn't in the lobby, so she carried on her tirade. I asked her if she was drunk. That might have been a dumb thing to say, but she was giving me that impression, being very obnoxious. She made threats to me as I as we rode the elevator.

It's making me think of a dream I had. I was in the back seat of my sister's car. She introduced me to a friend of hers, a pretty woman who at first was very nice to me. Then she started spitting out her racist views. I eventually made a remark, questioning what she was saying. She fumed, and stepped out of the car. She ran around it and was fatally hit by a passing vehicle.

I guess both of them were unstable, having wild mood swings. They looked similar: Medium length dark hair, kind of short in height. Both took a liking to me at first, but my words quickly sent them into a storm.

Is it a premonition? Did I push this woman over the edge? Do I need to do something before she has her own casualty?

Tuesday, 2/20/2018

I'm overdrawn by 5 cents this morning. I haven't received any notice, so it should be OK for a couple of days. It's nice doing business with a non-profit credit union. The Big Banks would probably pound me with overdraft fees. I remember being a student in Olympia a long time ago. My checks were bouncing all over. When I closed my account, there were still some outstanding checks that ended up going to a collection agency. I was later accused of fraud. This is the first time I've been overdrawn since, just pennies. It's still not a good feeling for me.

Lori is giving me that look again. She wants me out of here. She's given me the ten day notice. That's not unusual, but she's ready to hit me with an eviction notice next. I've done the things she pointed out to me, but have the feeling she'll get me with something. I can't guess what.

Friday, 2/23/2018

There's a guy downstairs who's been trying to intimidate me recently. I'm not sure why. He's never been very friendly, but lately he's taken it up a notch, slamming the door on me and cranking up his music as I walk by. We had a stare-down last night as I went out for a smoke, then he followed me outside. I don't know what he was thinking of, but he walked past quickly with his head turned down. He's a big dude, and I sure can't get another mark on my record right now. This has to stop. We need to talk, before the management gets involved.

Next week will be hectic, with the bug treatment, the colonoscopy and another inspection coming in rapid succession. I sure don't need another stresser right now. Maybe a silver lining: My psychotic symptoms are in the background. I don't notice the chatter or the stares so much. Perhaps this can continue after the rest is over?

I've reported the situation to the management. I might regret this, but I decided it was the best way to go. It gives me the upper hand. The woman in the office wasn't surprised when I identified the guy. "Oh, *Raaaandy*!", I heard her say. I have people to collaborate my story, so this should balance in my favor. With my recent experience, though, it's hard to say for sure.

Saturday, 2/26/2018

The woman down the hall has gone back to being nice to me. Tonight, while she was being escorted to her apartment, she told the guard how nice *I* am. She might not even remember the incident Sunday, and she was clearly drunk. She has a serious psychosis, I'd say manic depression, but I'm not a doctor. But I can sympathize. Alcoholism and mental illness can be devastating.

Monday, 2/26/2018

There are some people who want to see me out of the building. It isn't escalating yet, as it has with Randy. I'm sure there's talk, though. They don't like anything I do, my habits or withdrawing socially. I try to be polite and friendly, and most of the residents appreciate that, but there are some who've taken a dislike to me and would rather see me go. I wouldn't usually pay it much attention, but I'm under a lot of stress already and not sleeping. When I'm tired, some of my defenses are down, and I'm much more sensitive. I'm sure I'll get over this hump, but there are things that have to be taken care of.

The colonoscopy is *next* week, giving me a little relief. I haven't heard from Lori, and there isn't an inspection scheduled *yet*. She only has to give me two days notice, so it could be coming any time, but probably not this week. I think it's ready, but I'm sure she can pick something out. That leaves the exterminator. He's a nice guy, and doesn't complain much. This will be the easiest of the three.

Wednesday, 2/28/2018

My place is a mess right now. The exterminators moved furniture and brought out dirt that had gone unnoticed. Now it's caked on the floor from the spray. It's going to take days to clean this up, and I have a feeling Lori will be sending me a notice before the end of the week. She knows this is a bad time for it, and will make it as hard for me as she can.

I had to leave the place at 8:00 AM for the bug treatment. I was in a hurry, and forgot my ear phones. I spent $17 on a new set at the drug store that I'll only use once. I had to be out for three hours, and spent another $12 on coffee to pass the time. I bought some cigarettes on top of that. That's really more than I can afford to spend in one morning.

I'm in better shape than I realized. The elevator was out of service for much of yesterday, and I climbed 11 flights of stairs three times. They're pretty steep, too. I got a little short breathed, but it was much easier for me than I would have thought. I should do it more often.

Saturday, 3/03/2018

Lori's cracking down on door bottom seals now, of all things. I guess she ran out of smokers, and needed to find others to torment. She knows the lease agreement inside and out, and will go after any violators, no matter how small the transgression. She's a classic bureaucrat: A public employee who justifies her existence by enforcing arbitrary rules and regulations and maintaining an autocratic position of power and authority over the people she's meant to serve. God, I hate to think what it's like working for her. But at least they can "go home" at the end of the day. I have to live with her.

Monday, 3/05/2018

Contrast Lori with Winnie, the social worker. Winnie is here to help people and truly enjoys doing her work. She's loved by everybody, and has helped every one of us through a crisis at one time or another. She's a public servant dedicated to her job, and even helps us handle the bureaucracy here from time to time.

Lori seemed angry with me this morning, judging by the look on her face when we passed each other in the hall. Ironically, I was on my way to see Winnie, who, as usual, was happy to see me. I wonder if I'm in trouble? A bureaucrat with a grudge is dangerous to deal with.

Wednesday, 3/07/2018

16. That's how many polyps they found in the colonoscopy today. I almost postponed it again; my system doesn't clean out as fast as most do. I spent two hours sitting in a chair drinking the formula, running to the bathroom every twenty minutes. I eventually dozed off when they moved me to a bed to wait two more hours. In all, I spent eight hours there. And I'll be going through it again, given what they found. That's a very high number. Most don't get half as many.

Having slept most of the afternoon, I'm not really ready to go to bed, but the exterminator will be here at 8, and I have to be ready to leave at that time. I'm setting the alarm again, 7AM, two days in a row. I haven't done that in a long time.

Friday, 3/09/2018

There were complications on the surgery. I went to the emergency ward Thursday morning, bleeding out of my anus. I was there for over twelve hours before being moved to a bed, where I spent another 14 hours. A second colonoscopy came in between. I was uncomfortable, being in a cramped and crowded place with nothing to look at but the dingy brown curtains. They had a pattern, something vaguely looking like flowers. Staring at it was depressing. I tried to sleep it off, but a gurney in a noisy room isn't a place to rest peacefully. I was having thoughts about walking out, but the nurses convinced that wouldn't be wise.

The bed was comfortable, and it was quiet there, but I woke up restless at 3AM, having been laying down and barely moving for 15 hours. I needed to get outside and have a cigarette. The nurses there were helpful. They offered a patch, and gum, but I really had to get out. I felt really confined. I left for ten minutes, and was awake for a couple of hours after that, but finally went back to sleep. I kept hoping the doctor would be there at 8:30 sharp, but he ended up waiting until 10:30 or 11. It seemed like a longer wait than that. The nurses were happy to see me leave; I'm not sure if they were happy for me, or happy to get rid of me.

I was only gone for two days, but there seems to have been a lot of talk in that time. I'm getting rude, unhappy looks and gestures from my neighbors. Something happened, but I can't guess what it might be.

The place was in shambles from the bug treatment, as I expected it would be, but the note left behind indicates this is the final treatment. I haven't gotten a notice from Lori yet, but expect one soon, and will need at least a week to get this in order. I have the feeling I won't be given that much time.

After writing the above, a neighbor downstairs offered to give some spaghetti for dinner. She gave me a plate, and was very happy to share it with me. Had a nice chat with a neighbor friend when I went out for a smoke. He's a recovering alcoholic like myself, so it was kind of interesting. I was luckier than he was, having family nearby to help me through hard times; he's from the east coast. It's people like this that I need to have in my life, not those determined to bring me down with themselves.

Saturday, 3/10/2018

I'm sensing a lot of intrusion lately. The inspections and the bug treatments. Comments from both about my lifestyle. Comments or looks of disapproval from

people. I'm feeling the stares again when I go outside, like they're watching for something to go after next. It would seem like coming home from the stress of the hospital would be a big relief, but it's not. It's like there's a conspiracy to drive me out of here.

Monday, 3/12/2018

The list of risk factors for polyps is a little long, but tobacco, obesity and lack of exercise are among them. I've kept putting these thing off, but now I don't have this luxury. I have to tackle them now.

Wednesday, 3/14/2018

I have a woman upset with me who never seems to be unhappy about anything. I confused her for the one who shared her spaghetti with me. They're the same height, build and color, and have similar cheerful, chatty, personalities. Anyone could have made the mistake. Now she doesn't talk to me, unless I press her. I apologized to her already, but I guess I'll have to bear with this for a little while.

Saturday, 3/17/2018

The security guard is warming up to me. She's following me outside, and it isn't to track me. We've had some good chats. She's nice, but I'm not sure if I'm going to go for it now. I should, I don't get a lot of chances like this. Yea, there are women living in the building, but most of them are older, and just not attractive to me. Maybe the worst thing about middle age: You're drawn to younger women, but only older women are interested in you.

It's 5 AM, and I've been up for an hour. I slept for five hours last night, but not soundly. My sleep pattern has been even more erratic than usual, ever since being in the ER. I was up doing the laundry at 3 AM last week. I'll be napping a lot today, and going back to the same tonight. It's a hard pattern for me to break. The crazy woman down the hall is getting worse, and she's making things harder for other people, like myself. I'm going to talk to Winnie on Monday and ask her if there's anything she can do. Leticia needs help, and someone needs to intervene. I'm sure Winnie's aware of this, but it wouldn't hurt to have one more person speak up. Maybe if her residency were to hinge on getting help, she would be more open.

Tuesday, 3/20/2018

I just went over my tax return, and from the first go at it, it looks like I owe $4000. I'm sure I won't end up paying that much, but I'll have to get help with this. That would be a huge chunk out of the trust. The original award is already half gone. The dental work took a lot out of it, but the fees are killing me. $3400 over eight months. A $40 ticket for a show can end up costing nearly $200. I have to be more careful how I spend this.

Friday, 3/23/2018

I spent a little time with my neighbor the other night, helping her on her citizenship exam. She's been taking ESL classes for years, but barely speaks a word of English yet. It's a struggle for her. It felt good, bringing back some of my old tutoring skills: A calm voice, building up confidence, putting my knowledge to practice. It's the one fond memory I have of the college. The policy in the lab was no tutoring, but I saw others struggling, some brought to tears. The tech-savvy millennial generation wasn't as adept as people made them out to be. I couldn't stand by. I don't know if I could go back to teaching now; among other things, there's the subject matter. I'm years behind on math and IT, and those were what I was best at. I've forgotten most of what I once knew, and just lost interest along the way.

Saturday, 3/24/2018

The talk seems to be spreading. A neighbor confronted me on the elevator this evening, telling me I don't get out enough. He had a very serious, somber look on his face. I heard Corey mention to the security guard that I spend a lot of hours on Facebook. I'm not sure how she would know this, but if she does, I'm sure a lot of other people in the building are aware as well. The people in the respite center downstairs are mumbling. I don't talk to them much, or pass out cigarettes, and they seem to take that as a snub. I'm tired right now, and don't like being the center of attention. I'll sleep it off. I've gotten through it before.

There was a story this week about a woman who, at 37, was served a warrant for a shoplifting offense at age 12. I have a long running fear of something like this happening to me. Going back 30, 40 years, I got in a lot of trouble, and when I see a police car out in front, I wonder if something could come back to bite me. Something like that actually happened to me once; 2 or 3 years after leaving college and Olympia, a police officer found a warrant out for me for some checks I'd written that were never paid. I was charged with fraud. I didn't have any idea the checks were unpaid, let alone the criminal charge. The judge was sympathetic, but I still wonder if something else could come up and surprise me like this.

Sunday, 3/25/2018

I'm worried about the guy on 16. He's usually annoyingly chatty, but this past week he's been almost silent. He doesn't have the cheerful expression on his face. I asked him this morning if something was wrong, but he wouldn't say much. He's always having money problems, like myself, but doesn't have anybody to turn to. But that doesn't usually bring him down like this. He's too good to suffer like this, and I wish I could help.

I'm really starting to develop a fondness for the woman next door. I knew her name at one time, but typically forgot it. She was looking out the window when I came into the common area. She started pointing out, asking something about

the season. I told her it's Spring. She was excited, and thanked me for helping her with her English. I've gotta talk to her more. I installed a Chinese/English keyboard app on my phone. That will be a start.

Tuesday, 3/27/2018

I went out for coffee this morning, and things were out of place when I returned. The pillow was on the back of the couch. Maybe it's my imagination, but I feel sure I didn't put it there. I asked James in the office if staff had been there for some reason, and he told me there was no entry scheduled until the bug spray Thursday. This is going to bother me all day. Nothing's missing yet, but it won't be the first time.

I have a lot on my mind these days, and I'm not sleeping well. It's having an effect on other things. I missed two appointments on Friday. The calendar app on my phone isn't working, but it was on my mind Thursday. I completely forgot it on the day. I have stuff to throw out, a bed and the couch. I also have a lot of cleaning to do. I'm having trouble setting the time aside to get started. The cleaning is almost pointless. It will be a mess again after the spray. But I'll have to try to get the furniture out today or tomorrow.

Sunday, 4/01/2018

The new elevators will have wood paneling. I don't know what the management is thinking. Somebody will scratch those walls up within weeks, or even days. It's a big drawback of living here: Some people just don't care if they live in a nice place. Trash in the halls, vandalism, abuse. Lori's on my case for not living to her standards. There's a lot worse here.

The apartment is very dirty. I've barely gotten started cleaning up after the last bug treatment. It's really overwhelming. The floors are filthy, I have a bed to assemble, I've only started on the walls. I have to ask for some help. There's a non-profit that sends young people out once a month to do just that, and I'm going to ask Winnie to sign me up.

I was invited by my niece to come out for an Easter lunch. I just have too much to do, and I hate the long trip, anyway. She's in Sumner, I think, not even near the bus line. Then there's my relationship with my sister's family. Nicole and I get along well, but the rest, or at least Gary and Jen, tend to make me feel unwelcome. Gary thawed somewhat the last time I saw him, but these family gatherings are uncomfortable. I need to spend more time with them, or I won't have anybody left in a few years when Mom's gone. Not this weekend.

Monday, 4/02/2018

I spoke to Winnie this morning, but she didn't seem to understand what I'm going through. She lined me up with Lucy to help me prep for another spray. That isn't what I'm concerned with right now. I'm expecting to get another notice

this week for an inspection, and I just can't do that right now. I need help. I'm feeling overwhelmed, with both happening at the same time, and a manager who is almost impossible to please. I think she wants me out of here. I've been in the hospital recently, and things are building up. Cleaning up after a bug treatment is hard enough but this is an endless cycle. I've gotta get help.

There's a new woman in the building, and we seem to be off to a good start. I feel very confident conversing with her, more so than usual. Maybe it's because she's blind. I don't give much thought to my appearance, but maybe it's in my subconscious and putting an added burden on me.

The amount owed in taxes is considerably less than my original calculation, but it's $3400 and a big drain on the fund. It's only one time, but I won't have the money much longer. I have $12000 left, and it hasn't even been a year.

Tuesday, 4/03/2018

Lucy will find some help for me, but it won't be free. She estimates $20 per hour. I don't know how long it will take to get this done, but with two people, it shouldn't take more than one afternoon. It's going to be quite a hit on me financially, though. She didn't seem to see the problem. A broom and a mop and I'd be done with it, she suggested. I mentioned the walls, and explained the hopeless situation I'm in. I don't think she really understood, but she has my phone number and will call me back.

Lucy got caught on the elevator after leaving here. She called my number to get help. The maintenance guy was already in the hall, trying to get the attention of the elevator team. They finally came after 10, 15 minutes, and opened the door. Lucy was shaken up. I put my hand on her back, wanting to comfort her, but she stepped away. I wonder if it had the opposite of my intentions.

Saturday, 4/07/2018

There was a lot of drama last night. Jon across the hall was waiting by the elevator, wearing hospital clothes. He asked me for a cigarette. I went back to my apartment to get him one, but he was gone when I returned. When I got downstairs, there was a lot of commotion, with the guard and others surrounding Jon. I couldn't make out what was going on, but everybody went outside. He lit a smoke, so I just went on, not wanting to interfere or complicate things. Then I turned a few minutes later, and he was laying on the sidewalk, with people yelling at him. I then decided to talk to him, trying to calm things down. He was in pain, clutching his gut, and switching between sitting up against the fence and laying face down on the pavement. He said he was going to die in 15 minutes. He wouldn't say much more than that. Medics came, and he refused help. The police were called; at one point he'd tried to start a fire with a paper cup. I just stood back from that point on. He eventually cooperated, and I hope he'll be OK. I'll check in on him today. Not in his character at all, he's very quiet and withdrawn, like myself. Something pretty bad has happened to him.

The police returned a couple hours later, this time a whole platoon. They were on both sides of the building. I was afraid to go to the store. It turned out, somebody had reported his neighbor was stocked with guns, and was going to go on a shooting spree. It was a lie, and the guy who called was arrested for filing a false report. He might well get evicted for this spectacle. He's a young guy, seems pretty bright. I sure wouldn't expect him to do something as bone-headed as this. But I did some pretty stupid things when I drank, and he could be calling for help.

Spoke to the guy this evening and he says his neighbor was actually shooting a gun last night, something he's done before. If he's getting hassled as much as he implies, he should have filed a complaint a long time ago. Guns are banned here, anyway. I'm a little skeptical about his story.

I think the bugs are finally gone. I'm not itching anymore, and haven't seen any in over a week. I'm still reluctant to unbag everything, but should be doing that soon.

I'm in a rut online. I've been quiet both on Facebook and the music blog, just posting highlights there. I don't know what's keeping me back. I get a good feeling when I do creative things on the internet. It's the only way I've ever been able to express myself. That can be good or bad. Having a vent is healthy, but it may hold me back from taking on my social anxiety, taking away the urgency.

Sunday, 4/08/2018

The people in the respite center downstairs are determined to send me a message. They must talk about me a lot there, even the staff seems to have a grudge. It's happened before, but every several months a new group has trickled in and whatever the animosity was about has been forgotten. It's still curious how I get singled out. Maybe others have experienced the same, but I haven't heard anyone mention it.

Monday, 4/09/2018

There's an Asian woman down the hall who doesn't speak a word of English. She just says yes to everything I ask her. I could pop any question, and she'd agree. Too tempting.

Tuesday, 4/10/2018

A guy across the street was pointing at me and laughing earlier. He said something to the man next to him, and got a smile, then they separated as they crossed the street. He said nothing to me as he passed, just looked. I wish I knew what was so funny, but I guess it's between them.

I have a crush on the barista again. This one is Haily, I think. I was nervous when we exchanged names, so I forgot it as soon as I sat down. But she's a beautiful thing, sweet smile and very pleasant to talk to. I don't know what her status is, but she doesn't have much time for relationships. She has two jobs and goes to school, giving her a pretty full schedule. I don't think she has a full day off. I don't know that she'd be very interested in a middle-aged guy with no prospects, either. But it's worth trying.

Friday, 4/13/2018

I'm not the only one Lori is coming down on. I spoke to another guy briefly, and he feels she's out to get him. He's not very likable; he's loud, kind of obnoxious, and I've seen him kick his dog. But if he pays his rent and maintains his place reasonably well, they should leave him alone. A lot of people have been evicted here over the years, but for far more serious problems than housekeeping. I've been here nearly 25 years, and there have been good and bad managers, but this has got me on the edge. Lori doesn't just manage the building, she wants to manage people's lives.

Saturday, 4/14/2018

I had arranged to have somebody come by to clean my apartment yesterday, but there was miscommunication. She was going to call me a day or two ahead, but I never heard from her. I still had hope. My intercom isn't working, though, and Lori wasn't interested in helping me with this. I just wanted to test the land phone. Bitch. If the woman came, she must have turned around when I didn't answer. It was too late to contact her. Winnie was gone for the weekend, and I didn't have the woman's number. So now I'm spending the weekend getting this done myself. There's also an IKEA-type bed to assemble. I have three days to do this. I'm going to be up late tonight. It's hard to get started right now. I'm taking little steps, but will have to pick it up soon.

Sunday, 4/15/2018

I didn't get started cleaning last night. I was home, I had time, but there's so much to do, I don't know where to begin. I did wipe the walls down yesterday. Now there's a line of dirt where I couldn't reach any higher. I'm sure Lori won't be happy about that. Going any higher would require a ladder and moving heavy furniture, so that's the best I can do.

I have a cold, and was coughing all night. I'm more tired than usual. I called a triage nurse this morning for recommendations on OTC remedies. It's nice to have this 24x7 service. My next option would have been to walk into ER. I've done many times that for relatively minor ailments before. It can be hard to make an appointment in the clinic, but I've needed to see somebody about it and get it taken care of soon. I'll have to use this service more often.

I talked to my doctor last week about looks I've been getting from people recently. Kind of angry looks, mostly from strangers. He insists it's my imagination. Maybe it is. But this morning, I was minding my own business, smoking a cigarette, when a man walking past gave me a dirty scowl for no reason I could ascertain. I wasn't imagining this one. It was very clear. I couldn't guess what he was upset about, and let it go. But something's going on. I've been through this many times before, going all the way back to my last days on Capitol Hill. They always seem to think I know why they're mad at me, but no one says a word.

The other night, I was talking to my neighbor's boyfriend. Somehow, it got into what other people are saying about me. "What are they saying," I asked jokingly. He told me I don't want to know, with a smile. He added, "be careful." He was still smiling. I went inside my apartment, first assuming he was joking, but then wondering if he was really warning me. I'm still not sure. I have a very good relationship with Sandra, my neighbor. Several people go in and out of her apartment every night, and I can't think of any reason I'd be on bad terms with them, let alone being on an enemies list. He's probably forgotten, bit I've to find out if he really meant it.

Thursday, 4/19/2018

Helen, the housekeeper, came within a few hours after last minute arrangements. She was here, probably a little more than an hour, and I paid her $40. Her price is usually $15 an hour. She did a very good job and I was grateful for her coming on short notice. Lori was only here for a few minutes on Tuesday, and it was a cold reception. Neither of us were very comfortable under the circumstances. She didn't say very much, other than that she'll be back in three months. There have never been quarterly inspections before in the time I've been here, but apparently she has the authority to pull this one on me. She's determined to make this miserable for me. I'll have to ask Helen to come more often, but that's no guarantee. I've paid housekeepers before, and still failed these damned inspections.

Sunday, 4/22/2018

The bed bugs are gone, but I'm still sleeping on the couch, and not sleeping very well. I have a new queen size bed, an IKEA-type assembly in a two-foot wide container. I'm not a handy person. Neither was Dad, so I never learned from him, and I hated shop in school. I don't have much confidence to go forward on this. I'm going to have to find help.

I've had a cold for over a week. The coughing is worse than I ever remember. It's not helping me sleep at night. So much has been going on, it isn't the time to quit smoking, and that's aggravating it. But then it's never the time.

I'm beginning to be concerned about Mom. She's 84 and having problems that come with age. She's aching, has trouble walking, and is having days she can't

go out at all, even for a short time. Her mind is very clear, but her health is nearly all she talks about right now. She has years left, but faces living her remaining time in pain. It won't be a very pleasant way to live it out.

Thursday, 4/26/2018

I get asked for cigarettes four or five times a day. That's nearly two packs a week. It's inconvenient and it's expensive. It isn't hard to say no, but some people take offense in this. People from the hospital sometimes look at me in disbelief. They think I should be generous when as I have them. No, I'm not a charity. I don't really have enough money to keep my own supply. Even a dollar won't come close to putting me on budget.

I'm waiting on the energy assistance check. I pay no electric bill, but run up considerable wattage, with the computer on all night, lights, AC and fans in the summertime. If it wasn't paid in the rent, I'd have a pretty high bill. But the rent is no higher than other SHA housing complexes at 30% of income. So it's basically free, but I still get the EA check every year. It's just a nice windfall, a free gift for living here. I'm not complaining.

Friday, 4/27/2018

A gay guy called me "honey" on the elevator. The woman riding with us laughed hysterically. It wasn't *that* funny. There was some kind of joke I didn't pick up. I'm getting the feeling there are rumors going around here.

The elevator ride is getting hairy. I just don't feel comfortable when there are more than three or four people on a car, and it can be a long ride. I'm not the only one feeling tension. Most aren't visibly stressed, but a couple of weeks ago, a woman was in tears when she had to leave a grocery bag behind on the first floor. She was fed up. I'm getting the same way.

There's a new security guard on duty, a beautiful young woman named Angela. She's been here a few days, and I was looking for the opportunity to talk with her, but nothing felt right, until last night, on the elevator, ironically. We were the only two riding, and for a couple of minutes, we talked about her job and how long she will be here. At first, she was very friendly, giving her beaming smile and chatting away. Then, at some point, the smile was gone, and she began to seem annoyed or uncomfortable. It couldn't have been something I said. It must be my eyes.

Saturday, 4/28/2018

I feel like a jerk right now. A guy in a wheelchair was pushing himself up the sidewalk with one leg, obviously struggling. There's an incline there, and it's not easy. He stopped and asked me for a smoke. I didn't have one. I don't carry them with me when I step out. He smiled, and said thanks anyway, and went on his way. Then it crossed my mind to help him, giving him a push. I didn't. I just stood

and watched, finishing my cigarette and going back in. Then it struck me, am I so cold-hearted that I couldn't help a man with a bad leg, who clearly could have used an assist? It wouldn't have been very much trouble, just pushing him a half a block. He would've appreciated it. But I didn't and I don't know why. I usually help people when I can, or try to. Why did I watch this man struggle? Am I getting old and grumpy, and not caring anymore?

Speaking of old, I had lunch with Mom today, and we had a good chat. She wants to see me get out a lot more than I do; there's plenty to do where I am, some great walks. But I'm a hermit, recluding from the world, living like an elder person in declining health might. I have mental health problems that hold me back, but she's right, I've got to be more active. My health will decline pretty rapidly, if it isn't already, if I don't do more than I am now.

Sunday, 4/29/2018

The police have been here a lot in the last few weeks. This afternoon, somebody was wandering around the building with a sword. Somebody called 911, and it escalated. The guy's buddy made threats to people. He ended up being taken downtown. As incidents like this go on, and anxiety builds up among residents, Lori cracks down on smoking and door seals. Must be her version of the "broken window."

It's really pleasant having the elevator alone tonight. There aren't many people out, and I'm riding from the 1st floor to the 17th without interruption. That hasn't happened in a long time.

Wednesday, 5/02/2018

I asked Kaitlyn for her phone number yesterday. I'd noticed that she hadn't been mentioning her boyfriend lately, referring instead to her "roommate." I thought this might be a sign that she's available now. It seemed a pretty innocuous question. Asking women to lunch or a drink hasn't worked well. It wouldn't seem to put her in an awkward position, but it did. I don't remember exactly what she said, but she was pretty alarmed. She made it clear that she does not share her phone number. I guess things have changed over the last ten years. People are more cautious now who they give their number to, but I got the feeling she saw me as a potential stalker.

Saturday, 5/12/2018

I'm not sure why I haven't written in a while. I was doing it nearly every day. The blog was mostly inactive in that time, too. I've been down, but that's more reason to write; it's therapeutic for me. I'll try to get back to it here.

There's a woman from the med center who's laughing at me. I've seen her twice, and both times, she cracked up as we passed each other. The first time, she could have been listening to somebody on her phone. She had it out and was wearing

earphones. But today, I smiled at her as I walked by, and she broke into laughter again. She kicked the wall, as if she was hysterical. I don't think I've seen her before, and I can't think what's amusing her. She's a strange woman. Maybe I'll ask her if I see her again.

I've put off Mother's Day until next weekend. Lori and Gary are having a barbecue on that evening, but I really don't want to make the Sunday bus trip. There are long intervals and transfers to make between Seattle and Puyallup. This is one of those rare occasions that it would be nice to have a car. I'll meet Mom for lunch next Saturday instead.

Tuesday, 5/15/2018

There's an old man downstairs whom I see frequently on the elevator, and he always makes a point of making contact with me. Not a handshake, but reaching out to grab my arm or pat me. Every time. Thinking about it, he sometimes moves up next to me when the car is nearly empty. I suspect he's gay, and don't see him doing this to others. It's getting uncomfortable, and I'm going to have to tell him to knock it off.

Thursday, 5/17/2018

The elevator's been crowded all day, and I've been pretty tense. More than usual. The project isn't close to being finished. I've thought about moving to a lower floor where the stairs would be manageable, but I'd regret it later. The loss of the view and the privacy wouldn't be worth it.

I had a strange encounter the other night. A woman stood directly behind a sign post, watching me. It was like she was playing a game. She was too far away, and it was too dark, to get a good look at her, but at first I gathered she was a doctor from her white overcoat. But she was smoking a cigarette, in a restricted area, so that's unlikely. She did this for a few minutes, then walked away, across the street, not looking my way after that. As I left, she was giving directions to somebody, pointing and leading them. She must have been staff there. It would have been interesting to talk to her, but that didn't cross my mind.

Friday, 5/18/2018

I'm barred from posting on Facebook. Not for content, but for choosing to "opt out of the Facebook platform." I've been blocking the trackers that monitor activity off site. I was warned there would be some loss of functionality, but before yesterday, this was barely noticeable. Now I'm going to have to go somewhere else to rant and rave. This might be a good thing. I've been too comfortable on FB, and need to expand. My web domain is underused, and I think I'll start another blog there, for commentary and opinions. I don't know what I'll call it yet, but this might be fun.

Facebook has been creepy at times. The off-site tracking first sunk in to me after I visited the Social Security site. I started getting ads for agencies specializing in SSDI applications and appeals. Then one evening I was playing the radio on a stand-alone software music player. I got “suggestions” on FB for the station I was listening to, and a few others. For all I know, it could be reading this as I type. But I got so heavily invested in it, I let this go by. For the same reason, I don’t think I’ll delete my account. Not for now.

Sunday, 5/20/2018

There’s a guy in the building who seems to have singled me out to vent his grievances and frustrations. He’s whining constantly, and comes my way whenever he sees me. He just complains. He doesn’t even give me a friendly “how are you,” he just starts running his mouth off immediately. I don’t listen to him, just nodding occasionally, saying something like “I’m sorry to hear that,” and moving on. I can’t guess why he chose me. Maybe others are smart enough to know how to handle a person like this. I just stand there, smoking a cigarette or waiting for the elevator, pretty much captive. I’ve got to confront him about this. He’s passing his misery on to me.

I dropped my keys today. Not a big deal, except that they fell down the elevator shaft. It took nearly an hour for housing to call the security company to come out and open my door, and that was after a calling them a second time. There’s a charge for this, but I should be able to get it waved, or I would hope so. I’m not really at fault. It was just bad luck.

I’m pretty pumped about the blog. There are some technical problems, but this could get interesting. Bringing people to it will be a challenge, but I’m getting some good ideas.